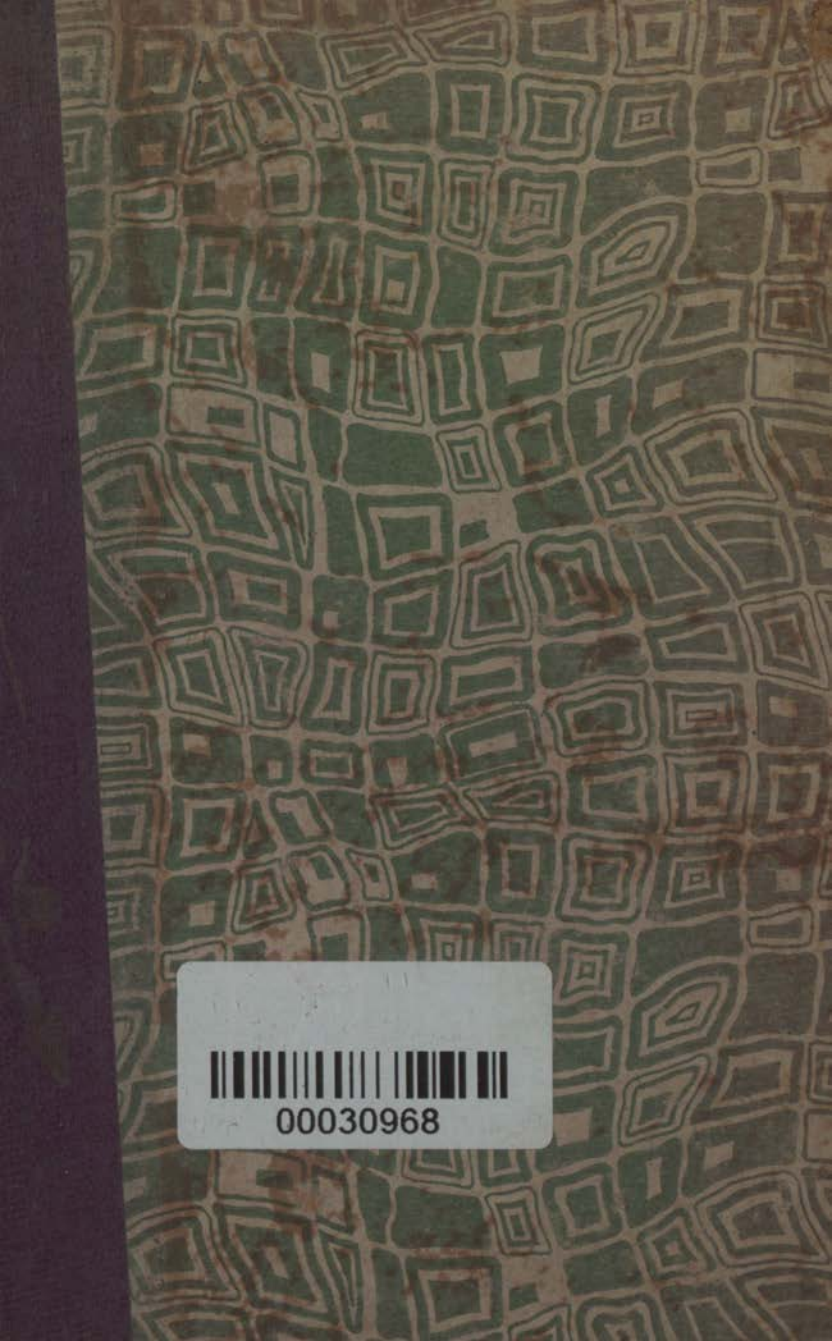
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(1483–1789)

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ERRATUM.

p. 88, l. 4 from bottom, *for* 1799 *read* 1690.

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS XIV AND COLBERT.

THE Peace of the Pyrenees, closely followed by the death of Mazarin, materially changed the situation in France. Since the time of Sully the power of the Monarchy had been maintained and enhanced chiefly by the great ministers of the King. Richelieu had broken the power of the nobility and restored and raised the international prestige of France. Mazarin had eluded or quelled the last rally of aristocratic revolt, and following in the steps of his predecessor, had exhibited France, both in war and diplomacy, as decidedly the first power in Europe. But Richelieu and Mazarin had left no obvious successor, though public opinion confidently expected that one would appear, for it had passed into a proverb that "the King and the ruler were two different persons." Such anticipations, however, were falsified by the unexpectedly energetic action of Louis XIV. The King was barely 22, and had not yet given any indications, even to those who stood nearest to him, of the self-confidence and tenacity that he was soon to manifest. He had seen, without any apparent jealousy, Mazarin regarded as the source of influence and power; the minister's rooms had been thronged with politicians, whilst the King's apartments were comparatively empty, but Louis, instead of resenting this, had exhibited towards his minister a certain amount of deference and submission. Immediately upon Mazarin's death he

showed unmistakeably his determination to govern. When those who had hitherto followed the orders of Mazarin asked where, for the future, they were to look for guidance, he unhesitatingly pointed to himself; for the future he would be his own first minister.

At the beginning of his direct personal rule he was unquestionably popular, except, perhaps, in certain disappointed aristocratic circles. Men had resented the foreign manners and tortuous policy of Mazarin; they welcomed the firm and clearly expressed will of the young King. His handsome appearance, the grace and dignity of his manners, all those personal qualities that helped to gain for him his title of "the Great," were as clearly apparent now as they were ever to be; while his character had not yet developed that absorbing egotism that became its great defect later on. He had really great talents for administration, and they were more than equalled by his industry and persistence. During the first years of his personal rule he devoted all his energy to the reorganisation of France on the basis of the absolute authority of the Crown.

He was resolved to have no first minister, but ministers—servants—he must have; and these he chose, not from the ranks of the great nobles or high ecclesiastics, who might have been tempted to use their office for the enlargement of their own power, but rather from the smaller nobles and men of the middle class who would owe their elevation solely to himself, and might be trusted to serve the Monarchy with complete devotion without aspiring to the position of a Richelieu or a Mazarin. We are not left to conjecture to determine his motives. He explains his policy and its causes very clearly in his Memoirs. "It was not to my interest to take men of eminence for my ministers. I wanted before all things to let the public know, by the rank from which I chose them, that I had no intention of sharing power with them."

It will be well here to consider the form of the central government of France during this reign, in which the absolutist

tendencies of the Monarchy culminate. Louis XIV carefully organized it, and it remained as he left it, until the whole fabric of the Monarchy disappeared in the Revolution. Everything depended upon the King. Those who sat in the Council were men of his own choice; there was nowhere any trace of representation, or of any constitutional or real check to the royal will. After the King himself the one great source of power was the secret council (the *conseil d'en haut* or *conseil étroit et secret*). Here the King, surrounded by his Ministers of State, and by all those whom he summoned for the purpose, decided on great questions of policy, and marked out the general plan according to which his ministers were to conduct the affairs submitted to their care. But subordinate to this Council were five others: (1) the Council of Despatches (*conseil des dépêches*), corresponding very roughly with the modern Minister of the Interior, which watched over the ordinary course of domestic affairs and controlled the action of the *intendants*. (2) The *Council of Finances*, whose title sufficiently explains its functions. (3) The *conseil des parties*, which had no directly political function, but acted as a court of appeal in certain cases. (4) The Council of War, and (5) the Council of Commerce, which was, however, not definitely organised until the year 1700. The *personnel* of these councils depended on the will of the King, and it varied from time to time. But the members belonged to four classes; there were the Ministers of State, the Councillors of State, the *Maîtres des requêtes* (members of the legal profession who served on subordinate positions in the councils, and were usually promoted to be *intendants* or other officers of State), and finally the Secretaries of State. The chief agents of the Crown were, for the reign of Louis XIV, the four great Secretaries of State (those, namely for war, the navy, foreign affairs, and the King's household), the Chancellor and the Controller-general of finances; and under them there was a whole army of officials with the *intendants* at their head.

We have considered their origin and their work in dealing with the administrative changes introduced by Richelieu; but under Louis XIV the system reaches its full development. The *intendants* are no longer now primarily instruments of national defence or agents of monarchical revolution. They are the ordinary and most important administrators of France.

The ministers who stood nearest to him during his earliest years were Le Tellier, the Minister of War; Lionne, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Fouquet, Superintendent of Finances, and —in a somewhat indefinite position at first—Colbert, who was destined to have most influence of all. Michel le Tellier had served Mazarin and the King during the stormy days of the Fronde, and was on that account the more trusted. War was his special department, and he was reckoned the first authority in Europe on all that concerned the details and the cost of the preparation of an army. But the King valued his opinion and took it on other matters besides those relating to war. His influence was possibly at first greater than that of any of his colleagues. Lionne had spent his youth in Rome, and had thoroughly penetrated the methods of Italian statesmanship, and even the Italians, who were counted the first nation in Europe for diplomacy, admitted his profound knowledge and remarkable diplomatic gifts.

These two men, Le Tellier and Lionne, continued to be, through a great part of Louis XIV's reign, the chief agents of his military successes, and to the last he trusted them completely. But Fouquet occupied a very different position. He had held his office for some time before the death of Mazarin, and besides his superintendence of the finances, he was connected with the Parlement of Paris, and had commercial and banking connections unsurpassed at that time in Europe. Unquestionably he had given the government valuable help during the late troubles. But even before Mazarin's death complaints had been lodged against him, and from the first Louis regarded him with a suspicion which deepened into

positive hostility. For, in the first place, he possessed immense wealth and vast estates, and had bought the island of Belle Isle, and fortified it in such a way that he might almost defy the power of France. He played, too, as patron of letters and science, a part which Louis XIV was afterwards to make his own. Molière, La Fontaine, and many others owed much to his protection and financial help. He had surrounded himself with something like a court, and his motto, "Quo non ascendam?" seemed to suggest an ambition too great for a subject. Not only his wealth, but also the suspicions as to its origin made him seem dangerous to Louis. The whole financial system of France was in such confusion that it required later all the genius of Colbert to remedy it. Fouquet was charged by Colbert with maintaining and profiting by that confusion. He kept no accounts or none that were readily intelligible: his own wealth and the income of the State were inextricably, perhaps purposely, involved. He was in close and friendly intercourse with the "*partisans*" whom Colbert denounced as the chief enemies of the financial welfare of France. In short, he was identified with the old corrupt economical system of France, and his fall was necessary to its destruction. But his position was so strong, and the King's tenure of power so recent, that the King dared not strike a direct blow at him. He must first be deceived into security. The King visited him upon his great domain at Vaux, was received by him with an immense display of wealth and power, and betrayed no sign of distrust or hostility; but he suddenly gave orders for his arrest and trial (Sept. 1661). Fouquet's financial procedures, though perhaps covered by custom, had certainly been fraudulent; but the court only condemned him to banishment. Louis XIV revised his sentence, and condemned him to perpetual imprisonment in the fortress of Pinerolo. A more distinct announcement could hardly be made that the age of first ministers was past, and that for the future Louis intended both to rule and reign.

The place thus made vacant by Fouquet's downfall was soon afterwards occupied, in fact though not in name, by Colbert. The King abolished the title of Superintendent of Finances as he abolished several of the titles that had prevailed under the earlier Monarchy because they had become associated with almost independent power on the part of their noble possessors. The time had passed, never to return, when the great nobles could claim as a right a place in the King's Council. Le Tellier, Lionne and Colbert were the King's councillors henceforth and, though all possessed the full confidence of the King, they were all of an origin far below that of the 'haute noblesse.' For the first period of Louis XIV's personal reign Colbert is the most important of the three. He belonged by birth to the middle class and had first shown his industry and high talents in a commercial house. Thence he had passed into the service of Le Tellier and very soon into that of Mazarin. It was through the Cardinal that he had first approached the centre of political affairs. He had been employed by Mazarin at first in the management of his own immense fortune and afterwards on affairs of State, and it was Mazarin who recommended him to Louis XIV. Yet it was rather to Richelieu that he looked as his pattern and guide. He believed himself to be continuing the great Cardinal's work. An anecdote of the time tells us that King Louis used to make merry over this devotion of Colbert to his greater predecessor's memory. When public affairs were being discussed the King would say, "Colbert is sure to begin by telling us what the great Cardinal Richelieu thought on the matter."

No one could be better fitted either by ability or character than Colbert for the task that Louis XIV had in hand. He never forgot his bourgeois origin and took no high title until nearly the end of his career. He had at Court the air rather of a busy clerk than of a Minister of State: his unassuming dress and his velvet bag stuffed with papers contrasted strikingly

with the costume of the nobles. There was surely no danger that he would rival his monarch in public interest or draw men's eyes away from the throne to himself. But this unassuming exterior covered talents of the very highest order, amounting in sum almost to genius. His industry was unwearied and without parallel among the servants of the State. He was not attracted by the luxury or debauchery that wore down the strength of Lionne: men said that the only rest he knew was change from one kind of work to another. He used this industry to penetrate every part of the financial, industrial and commercial life of France: and this industry and knowledge were joined in him to an inflexible will and an absolute devotion to the well-being of France. Everyone who participated in the widespread financial corruption, however high his station, trembled before his unflinching investigation: the overthrow of Fouquet had been chiefly due to him, and his vain protests against the military ambitions of Louis give an almost pathetic proof of the sincerity of his patriotism.

His correspondence with the *intendants* has been preserved and gives us a very clear view of the care with which he presided over the course of affairs even in distant provinces. Hardly anything could be done by town, village, or district without reference to the King's Council. The same correspondence shows us too how the authority of the Crown really triumphed over the phantom barriers which seemed to check it. The provinces that possessed nominally representative estates (the *pays d'États*) were hardly better off than those directly governed by the Crown (the *pays d'élection*). For such estates could only be held by the King's summons, and they were dismissed at the King's command. Their members were mostly dependent upon royal support or nomination for election. Lastly, if any members proved independent or recalcitrant, a very complete machinery of coercion could be put in action against them, culminating in their arbitrary imprisonment by *lettres de cachet.* The Government interfered too with the

government of the towns. The confusion of their finances was the cause or excuse for this interference. Colbert interfered constantly, and submitted the affairs of the municipalities to the influence or dictation of the *intendants*.

The reorganisation of France carried out by Colbert with the sanction of Louis XIV is a most notable event in European History. For a time the attention of the most powerful of European states seemed turned to the peaceful development of her own resources. Commercial and industrial progress was for the first time the chief object of a great nation's government. The effect was transient and perhaps premature, but it reflects great honour on the man from whose brain the ideas came, and some honour on the King who consistently supported his minister in the face of great popular opposition. The reforms of Colbert must be taken in their different divisions.

1. Financial Reforms.

The chief financial evils of France were, firstly, the extreme confusion, amounting almost to an absence of all accounts; secondly, the unfair and increasing burdens which had during the late troubles been laid upon the poorer and unprivileged classes; thirdly, the methods employed in collecting the taxes. Under the last head comes especially the employment of "Partisans." These were men who in times of extremity had advanced money to the Government and had received in payment certain taxes or the taxes of certain districts, the collection of which was given into their own hands. Irresponsible and possessing only a transient financial interest in the country, they exacted the taxes with great rigour and often in excessive amounts. Their wealth was notorious; they were exceedingly unpopular and their procedure had apparently laid them open to the law. It was against them that Colbert turned in the first instance. In the years 1662 and 1663 seventy million livres are officially said to have been refunded by them and legal action against them went on for some time longer. The State at the same time took the collection of taxes entirely into its own hands, with re-

markable results. The reduction in the cost of collection allowed decreased taxes to produce a higher revenue. It was not yet possible to strike a direct blow at the inequality in the financial burdens of the different classes and the practical exemption of the privileged orders: such a sweeping reform had to wait until the Revolution. But Colbert made some notable advances in that direction, and he would have liked to make more. Of all the taxes the *taille* pressed most heavily upon the peasantry. It had risen since the year 1633 from 20 to 53 million livres. Colbert was anxious to abolish it entirely and substitute a tax on all property, privileged and unprivileged alike. But though he failed in this he reduced the *taille* from 53 millions per annum to 35. In some districts the *taille* was reduced by 33 per cent. Many districts and individuals that had hitherto escaped from the *taille* were forced to bear their fair share of it. The *gabelle*, the State monopoly of salt, was more equally distributed, and the taxes generally were collected with less harshness. At the same time a better and clearer system of keeping accounts was introduced, which at last allowed the King really to understand the financial position of the kingdom. There are other financial reforms and changes which do not fall under either of the three heads that I have mentioned. Colbert for instance made unceasing war against the sale of titles of nobility that carried with them exemption from taxation; and the rate of interest on both State and municipal bonds was autocratically lowered. How great the result of his financial measures was will be apparent from one fact: in four years the expenditure decreased by twenty-two millions and a half of livres, while during the same years the revenues increased by thirty-six millions, although no new taxes had been imposed and some of the old ones had been diminished.

Colbert desired not merely to manage the present resources of State more economically, but also to add to them by the planting of new industries in France and by the development of the old. This is the effort which is

2. Industry.

most intimately attached to his name. The methods he employed have been severely criticised and their results have been questioned; but it cannot be denied that what he did made a profound change in French society. His aims and methods are plain. He desired to plant new industries and industrial methods in France, and to encourage their growth by destroying or diminishing, through heavy protective duties, the introduction of foreign manufactured articles. At present France bought many manufactured articles and sold few. England exported into France stockings; Holland woven goods of various descriptions; glass and lace work came from Italy. Some of these industries had previously been known in France and had languished. At the beginning of Colbert's influence the manufactures of France corresponded in no way either to her needs or to her capacity. Colbert desired to make France a great manufacturing and exporting, instead of a mainly purchasing, country, and into this task he threw himself with great energy and gained a great measure of success.

First, often in spite of considerable difficulties, he induced skilled artisans from foreign countries to settle in France, and teach their methods to French workmen. A considerable number of new industries were thus added, chiefly from 1660 to 1672. There rose up in various parts of France establishments for stocking-making, for silk-weaving, for glass and metal work and for many other processes. At the same time protective duties, in many instances amounting to absolute prohibition, and often increased from year to year, were placed on all articles coming from abroad. Not only, however, were these industries planted and protected by the Government; they were fostered, directed, but sometimes cramped by it. The King tried to make the purchase of articles manufactured in France fashionable, and himself spent large sums on them. The Trades Guilds were developed, and they were made the medium through which Colbert brought Government action to bear on the various industries. The size, character and price of the

various articles were determined by the State; the methods to be employed were carefully explained in State decrees; all divergence from the methods indicated was punished by law. A single instance must suffice to indicate the character and extent of these State regulations. A decree of Feb. 1671 orders that all stuffs found defective are to be exposed on a post with the name of the merchant or workman in fault. In case of a second offence the merchant or workman is to be publicly censured by the members of his guild. For a third offence the offending person is himself to be attached to the post. Colbert sometimes used the existing Trades Guilds for the development of the new industries, amending their rules and enforcing their observation. But he also established certain "royal factories" free from the cramping action of these guilds, which were always found to be unfavourable to the adoption of new processes of trade.

Such in brief outline was Colbert's great protective system of industry. From the vantage ground of more than two centuries it is easy to criticise it. We see its lack of "spontaneity, initiation and invention"; we see how industry "was forced to follow invariable courses instead of adapting itself to changing tastes and popular demands." It should be noted however that Colbert was not nearly so deeply pledged to the system of protection—not nearly so "Colbertist" as some of his followers. He himself speaks of protective duties as crutches whereby manufacturers might learn to walk, but which should then be thrown away. And while systematising and increasing the old frontier charges on imported goods, it is to be noted that he gave at the same time to France a great measure of internal free trade. He would have liked to abolish all internal frontier dues, and though the obstinate resistance of some of the outlying districts of France made that impossible, he at least made a great district in the centre of France free from customs. Picardy, Champagne, Normandy, Burgundy, Touraine, Poitou, Anjou, and the Isle de France formed henceforth for customs

purposes a single district inside which commodities could circulate freely. In much of the criticism that has been levelled against the policy of Colbert, an injustice has been done by regarding his measures out of relation to the circumstances of the time. Properly considered, what is most remarkable in Colbert's industrial measures is not his protective system, which was a development of ideas common to all countries, but rather the fact that he regarded the promotion of industry as one of the chief objects of the State.

3. Trade and Commerce.

France found herself in trade and commerce outstripped by states that she might fairly hope to rival. The carrying trade of the world was in the hands of England and Holland. France touched both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, but on both waters she was outstripped by rivals not so advantageously placed; and in distant parts of the world, in India and in America, other countries, Holland especially, were reaping a rich harvest while she had hardly begun to sow. Richelieu had found time to found certain companies which had languished in the subsequent confusion of France. Colbert took up the same plan which had been brilliantly successful in the case of Holland. A West Indian Company was founded for the American trade, and an East Indian Company began to work a field which was as yet mainly in the hands of the Dutch and Portuguese. The Northern Company was to turn its attention to the Baltic Sea; the Levantine Company to the Mediterranean. These companies were all carefully fostered by the State, which itself took one-third or one-half of the shares, and the King urged the principal officials of the State to invest. The future of these companies was in no case very brilliant: they were artificial creations, and there was no strong commercial and maritime spirit in France to support them. But though their financial success was but small, they seem to have done something to stimulate maritime and commercial enterprise. Colbert's internal changes are less questionable. His removal of many

provincial customs houses has already been mentioned. It was largely through his support that the great Languedoc canal, uniting the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, was carried out. The idea was not a new one; but it had been carefully worked out and its feasibility proved by Riquet, a French nobleman of Italian origin, who submitted the plan to Colbert in 1662. The canal was authorised in 1666 and completed in 1680. Its formation was an event of great importance, both by reason of its own success and the impetus it gave to the construction of canals elsewhere.

Besides these reforms there were others that Colbert hoped, but hoped in vain, to accomplish. Speaking generally, his ideas all tend towards an anticipation of the work of the Revolution—the equality of all Frenchmen under the King, the uniformity of laws and institutions throughout France, the devotion of the energies of the State to peaceful and industrial pursuits. On all these points there is a real affinity between his work and the work of the Convention of 1793.

But the early years of Louis XIV saw other reforms and changes that cannot be so closely identified with the name of Colbert. The rise of the absolute Monarchy had been from one aspect the assertion of the rights of the unprivileged classes against the nobility. In regard to this Louis XIV showed himself a worthy successor of Henry IV and of Richelieu. There were parts of France—Auvergne, the Cevennes, Poitou are specially mentioned—where a noble might slay a peasant without fearing the law, and where personal revenge was the rule. All this was as clearly insulting to the authority of the Crown as it was oppressive to the peasants themselves. Against such contempt of justice Louis determined to strike. He gave additional emphasis to his action by proceeding in person to Auvergne and seeing to the execution of justice. Nobles were brought to account for acts that had previously passed without comment. The execution of the Vicomte de la Mothe-Canillac, for the murder of a peasant, produced a profound sensation. Louis

could, without boasting, strike a medal with the device, "The Provinces liberated from the oppression of the Powerful." The same autocratic dealing is seen in Louis' dealings with the Parlement of Paris: he made light of their claim to deliberation before registration: in 1688 the King enforced registration, pure and simple, and enjoined it for the future.

The same tendency towards centralisation, uniformity and efficiency is seen in what concerns the army and navy. The semi-feudal character disappeared from the army. The authority of great officers over the districts where they held command was diminished; the soldiers were paid directly by the Crown, not through taxes collected by the officers. There was to be no doubt for the future that the army was the King's army. Changes of a more remarkable kind were made with regard to the navy. In 1661 there were only 30 ships of war. By 1672 there were 196. Brest was adopted as the great naval station. Careful regulations were drawn up for the manning of the ships. By 1672 France was certainly the third naval power in Europe, and had some claim to be considered the rival of England and Holland.

Louis XIV was not officially styled "Louis le Grand" until the year 1680, after his successes in the war that ended with the Peace of Nimeguen. But history sees that in that year the real prosperity of his reign was drawing to a close. It was chiefly during the twenty years from 1660 to 1680 that France deserved the immense prestige that she enjoyed throughout Europe, and it seems well, therefore, before we embark on the wars and diplomacy of his personal rule to consider certain other features of the reign, the features that gave its real greatness to the "Age of Louis XIV." For if the diplomatic and military results of the reign be exclusively considered it is certain that Louis XIV's record, though it contains pages of extraordinary brilliancy and success, added little to the territories of France, and left her weaker in 1715 than she had been in 1680; while the financial burdens that his wars had

heaped upon her had resulted in the financial entanglement and bankruptcy which were among the most important of the evils that drove France toward the Revolution. What makes the age of Louis XIV really great, and gains for it the abiding gratitude and admiration of posterity, is the work that it accomplished in art and poetry and thought; the high standard of manners that it set, first for France, and ultimately for Europe; the uniform type of law, language and civilisation that it tended to spread over the whole country. This is a subject which the scope of this book neither allows us to omit, nor to treat at the length that it deserves.

Many of the names that adorn the age of Louis XIV belong more truly to the age of Richelieu and of Mazarin. Condé's great victories belong altogether to the years when Mazarin was ruling on behalf of Louis XIV, and though Turenne fought many campaigns after Louis had taken power into his own hands—notably his great campaign in Alsace, in 1674—it was before 1660 that he had proved his right to be considered one of the greatest captains of European History. Descartes, French by birth, characteristically French in the clearness and comprehensiveness of his mind, did most of his work outside of France, and died in 1650, ten years before Louis announced his determination to be "his own first minister." Pascal had published the "Provincial Letters" in 1656, and died in 1662. Corneille lived indeed until 1684, but those works which justify his claim to rank among the great tragedians had appeared long before the death of Mazarin —the *Cid* in 1636, *Horace* and *Cinna* in 1639, *Polyeucte* in 1640, *Rodogune* in 1646. Even Molière, though all his best work was yet to come, had already a considerable reputation before Louis began to rule. It is partly true, therefore, to say that the literary glory of Louis XIV's reign belongs chiefly to the earlier years before his personal influence had begun, and that his later years are illumined by the rays of a setting sun.

But when all these deductions have been made, the literary

greatness of his age remains. Under him the French drama reached its highest development. Corneille (1606—1684) continued to produce a series of dramas which, if they never reach the excellence of his earlier masterpieces, still display the same admirable qualities, stateliness that is rarely bombast, situations in which our admiration is evoked for patriotism, heroism and devotion, a juster appreciation of the past, and especially of Roman history, than any other dramatist had attained to. It does not fall within the scope of this book to consider the characteristics of the French classical drama, its lack of action, its close adherence to its interpretation of the Aristotelian unities, its strict limitation to a somewhat stilted vocabulary. Corneille accepted these conditions—perhaps a little unwillingly, for he knew and profited by the Spanish drama, with its far greater freedom—and within these limitations he built up dramas that allow him to rank, if not with the Greeks and Shakespeare, at least with the tragedians that stand next to these.

If it is only Corneille's old age that belongs to the period of Louis XIV's personal rule, that rule saw the very fulness of the powers of Molière (1622—1673). He had produced good work indeed before 1660, but all his best dramas come after that date. His three greatest dramas were brought out at the very time when Colbert was taking in hand the financial and industrial administration of the country. *Tartuffe* was written in 1664, the *Festin de Pierre* in 1665, *Le Misanthrope* in 1666. The reception of these pieces was discouraging, and their production presented difficulties: it is probably for this reason that his work never again took the almost tragic note that was struck in these three pieces. But play after play in a lighter vein came from his pen, comedies all of them, and many of them farces, but all, even the wildest, touching the follies or vices or eccentricities of mankind, in a way that is meant to be corrective as well as amusing. Some of the most prominent are *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* which appeared in 1670, *Les Fourberies de*

Scapin in 1671, *Les Femmes Savantes* in 1672, and *Le Malade Imaginaire* in 1673. Very little is known with certainty of the private life of the greatest of all comedians. What we do know shows him to us troubled and harassed in his domestic life, but devotedly loyal to the company of actors with whom he worked. He was at first patronised and assisted by Fouquet, but on the fall of that minister gained the admiration of the King, and continued to be supported by him to the end. No small part of the glory of 'Le Grand Monarque' is reflected back on the King from this inimitable writer of comedies.

Racine (1639—1699) belongs entirely to the period of Louis XIV. He was closely connected by birth with the Jansenist leaders, his education was partly conducted at Port Royal, and the turn towards religion and devotion which he acquired there, though temporarily obscured, never entirely disappeared. His period of poetic activity is divided clearly into two parts. In the first, he produced, between 1667 and 1677, seven tragedies and one comedy. He followed in the footsteps of Corneille, though the spirit of his dramas is widely different, and the style is less vigorous. In Racine the love-interest becomes supreme, and we rarely encounter the heroic tone so characteristic of Corneille. But in the opinion of the society of his time he eclipsed the older dramatist; and modern critics proclaim that his best tragedies, his *Andromaque*, his *Bajazet*, his *Phèdre* are unmatched specimens of construction and style, penetrated with very moving and tender rhetoric, if not exactly with the spirit of poetry. After the production of the *Phèdre* he abandoned the stage, in pious revulsion from the cabals and intrigues of the literary world, and lived for the most part a life of quiet and devotion. But in 1690 he was induced by Madame de Maintenon, who had married Louis XIV in 1684, to write sacred dramas for the educational establishment of St Cyr, in whose progress she took a deep interest. He wrote for her *Esther* in 1690, and *Athalie* in 1691. They are hardly dramas in the current acceptation of the word, but in none of

his earlier works does he handle a style so perfect, or a rhetorical method so wholly admirable, and these religious plays are instinct with a devotional feeling that gives a glow to them, which the earlier dramas of passion never possess.

These three—Corneille, Molière, Racine—are perhaps the greatest names in pure literature that France can boast; but there are others who have deservedly received high honour. Among them two stand out very conspicuously. La Fontaine (1621—1695) wrote voluminously, but posterity has been content to forget nearly all except his *Contes* and his *Fables*. In them he shows a narrative style of the very highest order along with a delicate and penetrating humour. He does not possess imagination or feeling enough to reach a very high level of poetry—a remark which applies to all or most of the literature of the period—but within his limits he is supreme, and later generations have ratified the high eulogy pronounced on him by his contemporaries. Boileau (1636—1711) has suffered a different fate. He enjoyed so high a reputation with his contemporaries and so much of the favour of Louis XIV that the phrase which called him the "Lawgiver of Parnassus" hardly exaggerates his influence with his contemporaries. Almost the whole of his work is modelled on that of Horace, his *Satires* and his *Epistles* and his *Art Poétique*, and he seemed to his contemporaries to be an infallible guide in matters of style and taste. But his verdicts have not stood the test of time, and his influence now seems to us to have directed the literature of his age towards that frigid correctness which later on became its bane.

If we turn from Belles Lettres to other branches we still find a very noble record. The Church stood indeed on the verge of a great decline, but showed at present immense vigour and produced several men of great power and one of genius. Bossuet (1627—1704) is the greatest name. He was really great as orator and preacher, and he defended Catholicism, or rather attacked its opponents, with a wonderful mastery over all the

weapons of debate. But he touched many sides of human thought besides theology, though he brought them all into intimate relationship with his central theological conceptions. In his "Theory of Politics drawn from Holy Scripture" he develops a whole theory of government. He professes to deduce his theories from the same source to which the almost contemporary Puritans of England went for guidance, but he reached an exactly opposite result. For while to them Old and New Testament alike seemed to point to a republican and popular form of government, Bossuet deduced from their pages an absolute and irresponsible form of Monarchy. "Princes," he says, "are Gods and share to some extent in the independence of the divine nature (participient en quelque façon à l'indépendance divine)." His Discourse on Universal History is in some respects the most notable of all his works. It is perhaps the first clear statement of the continuity and unity of History. "Universal History," he writes, "is to the histories of each country and people what a general map is to special maps." He attained a great influence over the mind of the King and used it not altogether for good, for among the influences that induced the King to withdraw the Edict of Nantes his was not the least. Fénelon (1651—1715) is the next greatest name in the ecclesiastical history of the age. His mind lacked the breadth and energy of Bossuet's and his character was without his vehemence and dictatorial tendency. He was therefore less influential, though more beloved. We shall see him later coming into conflict with the religious and political policy of the Government and yielding on all points. His chief contribution to French literature was his *Télémaque*, a didactic romance written for the instruction of his pupil the Duke of Burgundy. The Church had other great names beside these,—Bourdaloue, Massillon, Arnauld, Pascal—for the last two, though their chief activity lies earlier, gave interest to Louis XIV's personal reign: Pascal's *Pensées* were not actually published until 1670.

It is not needful to give more names, for this book does not profess to be a history of French Literature. Enough has been said to show how great an array of really first-rate writers and thinkers were grouped round the Court of Louis XIV. They rightly illumine his age; rightly or wrongly they give him a personal glory. Yet it is hard to decide how far he influenced the literary and artistic development of the time. It is certain that he recognised the importance of art and literature, and tried to foster it by giving it his countenance and patronage. His own education was doubtless not far advanced in literature and art, and his attempt to play the dictator in this domain sometimes led to grotesque results. But his patronage did very much to raise the status of men of letters, and the protection and encouragement that he extended to Molière is especially noteworthy. He continued to support the Academy, which had been established by Richelieu, and took great interest in the appointments to it. New Academies were founded: the Academy of Inscriptions in 1663, that of Sciences in 1666, that of Architecture in 1671; and all these were perhaps due to the suggestion, and certainly were assisted by the collaboration of Colbert. A pension list was established. It is true that the order in which the recipients are placed does not in any way correspond to the verdict of posterity; and the existence of such a pension list increased the already great tendency to court flattery. But at least it shows the King's genuine interest in the patronage of literature, and the patronage which the King extended must have done a good deal to make literature and learning the fashion at the Court. On the whole it seems fair to rank Louis XIV along with Augustus or Cosimo de' Medici as a wise and successful patron of literature and the fine arts.

It is harder to speak of the society that gathered round the King. It consisted mainly of the nobles who a century before were resident on their own estates, exercising considerable political influence that often checked the authority of the King. Those days were past. Richelieu had broken the power, as he

had destroyed the castles, of the nobles. Their last rally in the Fronde only established more firmly the authority of the Monarchy over them. The King was now the source of all honour and place, and, as he never gave except to those who appeared at Court, attendance at Versailles became almost compulsory on all who desired anything more than a monotonous and powerless existence on their own estates. The life that was led at Court was not favourable to the sterner and simpler virtues. It was a life of idleness, of mere amusement, of perpetual search for promotion. The energies of the nobles finding no other outlet were displayed in intrigue and in duelling. Saint Simon, the careful chronicler of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV, has shown us the dark side of this brilliant society, its licentiousness, its continual and unavailing attempt to escape from *ennui*, its occasional cruelty. But if we turn to the letters of Madame de Sévigné and look at the same Court in its earlier period, we receive a different impression. Much doubtless depends on the character and temperament of the two writers, but Madame de Sévigné, for all the nobility and purity of her character, reports nevertheless for her daughter's amusement all the gossip and scandal of the Court. Nevertheless the impression is favourable. We notice the keen interest displayed in literary and religious matters, the real feeling and sympathy that were to be found even at Court, and perhaps, above all, the universal excellence of manners. The same favourable verdict is supported by considering the character of the literature that was popular at the Court: a society cannot have been merely frivolous or wholly licentious that delighted in the dramas of Corneille, Molière and Racine. Doubtless there was deterioration with lapse of time, as the evil influences of a Court life without employment began to tell on the nobles; but, if we look at Versailles when Louis' glory was at its zenith, we see the King surrounded by an exceptionally able, brilliant and refined society. And though the point hardly admits of proof, it seems highly probable that

one of the greatest services that the age of Louis XIV rendered to civilisation was in the improvement and refinement of manners. Saint Simon lays great stress on the coarseness, the pettiness, the buffoonery, the practical joking that lay underneath the gorgeous exterior of Versailles; but even in Saint Simon, and still more in Madame de Sévigné and the other less bitter memoir-writers of the time, we get a better impression. The manners of the Court were doubtless too stately, too pompous and often quite artificial; but, if we contrast the Court of Louis XIV with that of Louis XIII or Henry IV or with that of our own Queen Elizabeth, we shall feel that a real progress had been made; and the influence of French manners during the next hundred years acted with great and very beneficial effect on most European Courts, and doubtless through them upon society at large.

It is a difficult matter to speak with conviction of the personal character and abilities of the monarch who stood in the centre of this blaze of splendour, doubtless the most prominent figure in Europe. The immense power that he controlled inevitably surrounded him with flatterers, and the readiness with which he lent his ear to these is perhaps the chief mark of weakness in his career. Flattery was heaped upon him by small and great. The courtiers and place-hunters spoke after their kind, but their words are re-echoed with equal emphasis by nearly all that is best in France, in every station of life. Bossuet can greet him as "the new Charlemagne"; Molière sings his praises throughout; Racine declares that his condescension and kindness are "the most glorious thing" that can be bestowed upon any one. It is more striking to find Leibnitz in 1698 declaring Louis XIV himself "the greatest wonder" of his age; and perhaps most striking of all to find those opinions repeated in private letters that can never have been intended to meet the eye of the King. Nowhere, perhaps, can we better appreciate the dangerous atmosphere of flattery and adulation in which the King lived, than if with the help of

Saint Simon and other memoir-writers of the time, we enter the King's bedroom during the ceremony of the *lever* and the *coucher*. Whatever was greatest by birth or station in France thought it an honour to be present while the King went through the operations of the toilet. Those present saw the King put on his shoes and stockings "with great address and grace": every other day they saw him shave himself: they reckoned it the highest honour to take any part in the ceremony, and Saint Simon counts it a "signal mark of the King's favour" when he is allowed to hold the King's bedroom-candlestick.

From such eulogy there has been an inevitable reaction, assisted and accelerated by the full publication in our own century of Saint Simon's Memoirs. The demigod is here brought down to perfectly human proportions. The stories of Saint Simon lay stress on the King's ignorance, on his carelessness for the feelings of others, on his egotism. "The King," he writes, "loves and cares for himself alone, and is himself his only object in life." But probably the reaction has been as exaggerated as the eulogy. It is impossible to think that the real ruler of France from 1660 to 1715 was incapable either as statesman or diplomatist. His choice of servants and agents was rarely at fault. The triumphs of his early reign are to be ascribed to himself as well as to his ministers, and if his unbounded ambition is accountable for the disasters of his later years, it must at least be admitted that the dogged resistance of France, when all Europe thought her sinking, is largely the result of his tenacity and industry. His industry and energy do not seem to have slackened during his long reign. He knew the diplomatic world of Europe as no one, not even his minister Lionne, knew it, and he was capable of acting on his knowledge. His title of Louis the Great has not clung to him universally; he has no claim to rank with Richelieu or Cromwell or Frederic of Prussia among the great Makers of Modern Europe; but facts do not allow us to deny him great abilities and a great personal influence on European affairs. It was

perhaps soberness of judgment that was most lacking to him. The atmosphere of flattery told on him in the end. He himself wrote, "When a man can do what he wishes, it is hard for him to wish only what is right"; and his later years show an unbridled ambition. He indulged in schemes of conquest in which means were not adequately adapted to ends, and in which the ends, if they could have been reached, would have been useful neither to France nor to Europe. But this applies chiefly to the later years of his reign. If his reign had closed in 1672 no one would have refused to recognise his claim to rank as one of the greatest of French Kings.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EARLY WARS OF LOUIS XIV.

It is not often that one state has had such a preeminence in Europe as France had about the year 1660. Everything seemed to favour her. She was stronger than her neighbours, and for various reasons she was growing stronger while they were growing weaker. The Peace of the Pyrenees had left Spain completely exhausted: and, since she was suffering from absurd and ruinous fiscal arrangements, and from a social system corrupt and oppressive to a very high degree, no early recovery was to be anticipated. Germany was still weak from the effects of the Thirty Years' War. The Empire was little more than a name, and of the smaller states no one had as yet sufficient strength to assume the leadership of the German race. The situation in England after the Restoration made Charles II very anxious to keep the peace and made him also regard France as his most probable and most useful ally. Holland was indeed strong and flourishing: her naval power and her commerce were perhaps the greatest in Europe. But her army was weak and her constant rivalry with England left her little power for active interference in the affairs of Europe. Meanwhile, in France, domestic discord had ceased, and the nation at large welcomed Louis XIV as the restorer of peace and unity to the State. Under Colbert the country was escaping from its financial difficulties and growing conscious of its immense resources. The soldiers and the captains of France were

without rivals in Europe; and at the head of France was a Prince both anxious and able to use them.

The army had done very brilliant things under the administration of Mazarin, but its organization was much improved during the early days of Louis XIV's reign. Better weapons had been introduced. The fire-arms were improved; the pike was replaced by the musket; the grenadiers became a special arm; great progress was made in artillery and in siege apparatus. A better discipline was enforced throughout, especially upon the noble officers who had been accustomed to live and act with the utmost licence. They had now been brought under control, and the adoption of a general uniform was the outward sign that the army had become the army of France and had ceased to belong to the feudal nobles. A better training for officers was instituted, and the power of purchasing commissions was diminished. To the common soldier a certain limited amount of promotion was made possible, and military hospitals were established. Nor was the military strength of France less conspicuous in the commanders than in the general arrangements of the army. Condé and Turenne were at the height of their reputation; though Condé never again enjoyed such days of glory as his early years brought him. Luxemburg, Villars and Vauban possessed a large share of their military skill, though they hardly rival their reputation. Vauban is especially important for the period that is immediately to follow; for it was a period rather of sieges than of battles and campaigns, and, whether in attack or defence, Vauban had, at first, no rival in siege operations. He replaced the former lofty masses of masonry by fortifications lower and more adapted to the methods of contemporary war.

With such a force and such opportunities Louis XIV could play a great part in European affairs, and he soon showed his intention to be recognized as the first power in Europe. He could not indeed claim precedence before the Emperor: traditional etiquette did not allow that: but at least he meant

to be the first among Kings. His first conflict was in the streets of London, where the French ambassador acting upon the King's orders insisted on taking precedence, in a Court ceremony, over the representative of Spain. Blood was shed and war was threatened, but in the end Spain had to give way, and the King of Spain made a formal and humiliating declaration that henceforward he would no more claim precedence over France. The French King refused to allow French ships to salute the English flag in all waters, as the English Government demanded, and he had his way. He showed the same insistence on his dignity in his dealings with the Papacy, with whose power throughout his reign his relations were rarely cordial. There was a quarrel between the Pope's Corsican Guard and the French representative, the Duke of Créquy, and Frenchmen were slain in the tumult. Louis XIV insisted on full reparation. He was not satisfied with the deposition of Cardinal Imperiali, the Governor of the City. He laid hands upon the Papal City of Avignon and refused to give it back until full satisfaction had been given. Cordial relations were not restored until in 1664 a special Legate was sent from Rome to apologise for the insult.

In these incidents and in others the determination of the King to be recognised as the first power in Europe was clearly shown; but they passed over without entailing actual war. The first war of Louis XIV's personal administration—the War of Devolution—began in 1667. Its causes and its objects are far more important than its military incidents.

The War of Devolution.

The Northern and North-Eastern frontier of France was her most vulnerable point. Turenne had called the attention of his master to the fact that Paris was only four days' easy march from that frontier, and that the absence of any natural barriers increased the danger. Almost from the time when we can speak of France as having a foreign policy at all, she had looked eagerly towards the Netherlands and the Rhine for a rounding off and

strengthening of her territory. The matter had often been before the mind of the King since the Peace of the Pyrenees: for his marriage with Maria Theresa, the eldest daughter of the King of Spain, had opened up a possibility of acquiring the desired territory without a struggle. It is true that at the time of the marriage he had solemnly renounced all claims of whatever kind that might come to him through his wife. But from the first he had regarded his promise as of doubtful force. He maintained that it had been made conditional on the payment of the Queen's dowry, and that dowry had never been fully paid; further he alleged—and the allegation found some support both in Brussels and Madrid—that it was invalid because it contradicted the traditional customs of Spain. Diplomatic efforts had already been made to procure from Spain some recognition of the French claim, but without any important result. But when it became apparent that the death of the Spanish King Philip IV was not far off, the French claims began to grow more definite in their character. No claim was put forward to the whole of the Spanish possessions, but the right to a part of them was carefully elaborated. That part was in the Spanish Netherlands. A local custom was discovered to exist there, whereby, if a man married twice, his property descended to the children of the first marriage to the absolute exclusion of those of the second. It seems that this rule applied only to the transmission of landed property in certain states, and could not, with any justice, be stretched to apply to the sovereignty over the whole country. But it furnished such an excuse as diplomatists demand even for the most violent aggressions, and when Philip IV died in 1665 Louis XIV proceeded to act on it, by demanding the cession of Brabant, Hainault, Namur, Antwerp and other districts.

The moment was very favourable, for the Netherlands had no prospect of any valuable alliance: the Empire was engaged in a war with the Turks: England and Holland were engaged in a fierce naval struggle which was likely to leave

neither of them strength nor will to resist France. Spain herself was engaged in a war, and a losing war, with Portugal. In the Netherlands themselves the garrisons were small, and few preparations had been made: the country was really incapable of resisting the blow that was about to fall upon her.

The King took a personal share in the invasion, and he was accompanied by much of that apparatus of pleasure and of luxury with which he was accustomed to surround his Court. The issue of the campaign was never in doubt, but it was not the triumphant parade that might have been expected. Turenne commanded the operations, and the Spanish Governor, the Marquis of Castelrodrigo, could not venture to meet him in the open field. But though most towns fell without any great resistance into the hands of the French, there were some that made an effective resistance. Charleroi, Tournai, Douai, Courtrai, Oudenarde, and Lille were captured. The attack next turned against Franche Comté, which nominally formed part of the Empire. Its connection with Spain was a very weak one, and little loyalty was felt for the Spanish Crown. No resistance was made. The country was in the hands of France within fourteen days, and the whole campaign was over in three weeks (1667).

The Triple Alliance.

But the successes of the French King had meanwhile roused the jealous watchfulness of Europe. England and Holland forgot their jealousies and commercial competition in order to oppose the advance of this more dangerous rival. Peace was made between them on July 31, 1667, and on the 23rd Jan. 1668, Sir William Temple and de Witt brought into existence the Triple Alliance between England, Holland, and Sweden for resistance to the French advance. The three strongest representatives of Protestantism in Europe, the three powers that had contributed most to the overthrow of the Spanish power in Europe during the previous hundred years now joined for the defence of Spain against France. Louis XIV, for various reasons, thought it well to yield. The resistance which this new alliance could offer

would certainly be great; Louis' ministers warned him that the war was consuming the resources of France; he himself, probably, was not so imperious, nor so devoted to military glory, as he afterwards became. He had already made conquests which would greatly strengthen the French frontiers, and he could now retire and pose as a generous conqueror. Moreover, reports as to the health of the Spanish King Charles II made it quite possible that the whole question of the Spanish succession would shortly come up for decision, and Louis XIV wanted to have his hands quite free to deal with that great and difficult problem. He accepted, therefore, the terms of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (April, *1668*), and Franche Comté was abandoned. But part of Flanders and many strong places—Charleroi, Douai, Tournai, Courtrai, Lille, Oudenarde—remained in the power of France. These places were all strongly fortified by Vauban. The French frontier was very much strengthened, and Holland was brought considerably nearer to the danger of a French attack.

The Dutch War.

Four years passed between the end of the War of Devolution and the attack upon Holland. To attack Holland was a complete deviation from the traditional policy of France. The success that attended on the heroic struggles of the Dutch under William the Silent and his successors had been due in a very large measure to the support they had received from France. It was natural that the Huguenots of France should sympathise with them and help them; and Henry IV, even after he had seated himself on the throne and had abjured Protestantism, still regarded the Dutch as natural and even necessary allies. So also did his successors in power, Richelieu and Mazarin. The Dutch could not indeed any longer expect sympathy from France on the score of their Protestantism or of their form of government. But the struggle between the French and the Spanish power was the pivot on which European policy turned; and Holland, with her wealth, her navy and her stubborn soldiery, was

necessarily ranged on the side opposed to Spain. Subsequent events, too, do not allow us to doubt that friendship with Holland was still the wisest policy for France; if for nothing else, because it would have given her maritime support against England, and enclosed the much desired Spanish provinces between two fires.

But powerful motives were impelling Louis to desert the traditional policy of France. Religious motives were beginning to exercise a very strong influence over the King. We shall see in the next chapter how disastrously they worked upon his domestic policy. They induced him also to regard himself as the champion of Catholic unity in Europe, and he therefore hated the Dutch as the most powerful representatives of Protestantism upon the Continent. Moreover his absolute and fanatical belief in monarchy as the only legitimate form of government was offended by the independent tone of republican Holland. He had resented the claim of the Grand Pensionary, de Witt, to mediate between France and Spain, and regarded the Dutch as the chief agents in the Triple Alliance that had checked his course in the Devolution war. Arrogant words were reported, and insulting medals were alleged to have been produced in Holland. It was said that Van Beuningen, the Dutch diplomatist, had struck a medal representing himself as Joshua staying the course of the sun, and, as the sun was already the favourite device of Louis XIV, the allusion was very obvious. It is certain that all the anti-monarchical pamphleteers, who had been driven from France by the establishment of the absolute monarchy, found an asylum in Holland, whence they kept up a petty and irritating attack against France. But there was a more serious consideration than all these. Holland was the great commercial rival of France. The marine of France was just coming into existence: her commerce did not very readily respond to the calls of Colbert: it was thought that, if Holland were crushed, the way would be clearer and easier. Colbert, usually the good genius of

Louis XIV, now threw his influence on the side of war. The finances had recovered; the army was in perfect readiness; those who were answerable for military operations—Louvois, Vauban, Turenne—were all for war. Louis therefore determined to crush the Dutch.

Before delivering any actual blow against their country, he followed his usual plan of stripping them of all their allies by a course of most astute diplomacy. Louis XIV was already on terms of personal friendship with Charles II of England. Charles had allowed the French King to purchase Dunkirk, Cromwell's conquest, in 1662, and already on several occasions he had received money from Louis. But in view of the coming war it seemed necessary to take still further steps to ensure the neutrality and, if possible, the active help of England. The Duchess of Orléans, sister of Charles II, in an interview with her brother at Dover, induced him to enter into an agreement that relieved Louis XIV of all fear of English opposition. Charles was to receive a subsidy of French money which would save him from the painful necessity of constant appeals to his Parliament; in return for this he undertook to introduce Roman Catholicism into England whenever opportunity served, and to give Louis XIV assistance in his war with Holland. It was reasonably hoped that the union of the English and French fleets would rob the Dutch of that naval supremacy in which their chief hopes lay. The third member of the Triple Alliance also fell away from Holland. A political change in Sweden had brought a French partisan, the Chancellor Magnus de la Gardie, into power. He was able to announce that Sweden would help the French in the coming war by holding in check such German powers as would be likely to assist the Dutch: in return for these services Pomponne, the French representative, promised considerable subsidies. Louis was equally successful with the closer neighbours of Holland. Charles IV of Lorraine would certainly have given help out of hatred of France, if not from sympathy for Holland. But in

Preliminary diplomacy.

the summer of 1670 Marshal Créquy occupied the country in less than a month and drove the Dutch from his territories. Maximilian Henry, the electoral Archbishop of Cologne, was already irritated with Holland on account of her occupation of his fortress of Rheinberg. French money changed this irritation into active hostility. A French garrison was admitted into Neuss. A money payment further induced the warlike Bishop of Münster to promise to bring more than half of his forces into the field in alliance with the French.

The Triple Alliance had thus vanished into thin air: the allies of Holland had become her enemies: the road for a French attack upon her was open and easy. At the same time her own internal condition was not favourable to a very stubborn or closely united resistance. Her commerce was indeed flourishing, and the victory over the English fleet in the Downs in 1666, with the blockade of London in 1667, sufficiently showed the strength and the efficiency of her navy. But her government was such as to make rapidity and concentration of action difficult, and the country itself was deeply divided into two very hostile parties. It is necessary to grasp the causes of this division in order to understand the course of the war.

Condition of Holland.

We have seen already how large a part the Orange family had played in the early struggles whereby the United Provinces became an independent nation; nor had the Dutch themselves forgotten their debt to William the Silent and his successors. But those successors had revealed a selfish and personal ambition very different from the heroic self-devotion of the first William. The spirit of the Dutch population, especially of the middle and upper classes, was strongly republican, and they had seen with great dislike the efforts of the Orange family to found a personal and independent dynasty in the country. The outcome of this feeling had been the abolition, in the provinces of Holland and Utrecht, of the office of hereditary Stadtholder or Lieutenant-Governor, which had hitherto been maintained

in the family of William the Silent. At the same time the Perpetual Edict made this abolition 'perpetual and irrevocable,' and imposed an oath on all public functionaries to observe the Edict and resist its abrogation (1667). Supreme control was henceforth vested in the States-General, and the municipalities and provincial estates possessed a degree of independence that made the efficient and rapid action of the central authorities extremely difficult. Such a constitution served for times of peace and prosperity, but was unfit for war. An Orange party already existed and rapidly developed itself. It was supported by the poorer and more democratic sections of society, and leaned rather on the army than the navy. But for the present the republican and oligarchical party was in the ascendant. Led by the Grand Pensionary, John de Witt, it had brought Holland successfully through the war with England, and had raised the prestige of the State by the part taken in negotiating the Triple Alliance. The navy was strong; but the weakness of Spain seems to have caused the neglect of the defences by land. The last representative of the House of Orange was William, afterwards Stadtholder, who in 1572 had just attained his 21st year. He was admitted to military command; but, though destined to so vast a *rôle* in European politics, he seemed for the present absolutely excluded from political and diplomatic power.

The Dutch War.

Louis did not search in the case of Holland for any such legal excuses as he had alleged for the attack on the Spanish Netherlands. Ambition and resentment were all but openly declared to be the causes of the war. The States in vain asked for an explanation of the military preparations or for some indication of the King's grievances and demands. It was made plain to them that the King would tell them the terms of peace only after he had enjoyed the satisfaction of conquest.

When the campaign began, the strength and the reputation of the French army were at their height. The King himself took the field and was accompanied by Turenne and Vauban.

Condé commanded a second army, Luxemburg the third. Lionne had died just before the war began; but Louvois was there with his great knowledge and energy to organise the resources of the war. The first year saw little but a triumphant procession. The Elector of Cologne was also Bishop of Liège, and his alliance allowed the French to pass up the valley of the Meuse and so on to Dutch territory without violating the neutrality of the Spanish Netherlands. It was along this route that the main body of the French army passed, and the first blow fell upon the fortress of Maestricht, into which the Dutch had hurriedly thrown a garrison. It was thought that the blockade of Maestricht would detain the King, but leaving enough troops to watch it he pushed on at once towards the Rhine. The extreme drought of the summer here and throughout the year weakened the Dutch defences. A countryman revealed a practicable ford. A very small body of troops was upon the opposite side. The King passed with no real resistance and with very little loss. When the news of this passage of the Rhine was brought to Paris the capital greeted it as one of the greatest of military exploits. As a matter of fact it does not seem to have required much skill or courage; but it produced a great moral effect on the spirits of the Dutch. The Prince of Orange was posted on the Yssel, but he could hold his place no longer. Utrecht was abandoned and soon fell into the hands of the French. They captured Zutphen and Nimeguen, and many other places. Amsterdam was clearly in danger; and if Amsterdam fell the State must fall with it.

But then this country so fertile in prodigies of stubborn valour produced yet another. The catastrophe of the war had inevitably excited the mind of the people to the last degree. In their extremity they naturally thought of the Prince of Orange. When his great-grandfather, William the Silent, had undertaken the defence of the land just one hundred years before, the outlook was even gloomier than at present. It naturally occurred to many that his namesake and descendant

might accomplish a second deliverance for the country, and this feeling was stimulated by the Orange party and the agents of the Prince. The movement first showed itself in the great towns and in the Provincial estates. John de Witt was unjustly regarded as the cause of all the disasters. He was savagely attacked and nearly murdered. Dordrecht, Leyden and Amsterdam declared for the restoration of the Stadtholdership: and, in July 1672, the States General conferred upon William of Orange the supreme command both by land and sea.

The position seemed almost desperate. The three southern provinces were in the hands of the French, and it was difficult to procure a sufficient supply of either men or money. But William was personally popular, and the country was doggedly determined to defend its independence. The Dutch appealed to their great and permanent ally, the sea: the dykes were cut and the water poured in upon the land, and this, together with the floods of an exceptionally wet autumn, saved Amsterdam, and made the advance of the French arms elsewhere impossible. Louis had with rash magnanimity dismissed the Dutch troops whom he had taken prisoners for a small ransom, and the gaps in the patriotic regiments were thus filled up. But the terms insisted on by Louis most of all helped William in his task. For when Dutch representatives had waited upon Louis to offer him what they thought very vast concessions—Maestricht and the towns on the Rhine that he had taken as well as all the fortresses outside of the Seven Provinces of the Republic—they found their offers scornfully rejected. The new minister, Pomponne, who had taken Lionne's place, did indeed advise acceptance, and his advice was supported by Turenne; but Louis was encouraged by Louvois to reply to the advances of the Dutch by extravagant demands, yielding as he himself subsequently declared "to the promptings of ambition and glory." His counter-proposals would have amounted to the extinction of Dutch independence. The Dutch frontier was to

recede as far as the Lek: England and the Bishop of Münster were to receive satisfaction at the expense of Holland: Roman Catholicism was to be tolerated: all tariffs hostile to the mercantile interests of France were at once to be abrogated, with no promise of reciprocity on the part of France: a war indemnity of twenty-four million livres was to be paid. Lastly, in order to declare to all the world the vassalage of Holland to France, the Republic was to send every year a solemn embassy to present a gold medal to the King of France, "thanking him for having maintained the independence of the United Netherlands which his royal predecessors had established." While anything of the old Dutch spirit remained it was certain that these terms would not be accepted. The outburst of patriotic indignation strengthened immensely the hands of the new Stadtholder, though it led to the atrocious murder of John de Witt and his brother at the Hague (August, 1672), a murder which William took no trouble to prevent if he did not actually connive at it.

The whole population was for war; but if Louis had only had their enthusiasm to reckon with he could in the spring of the next year have driven home his blow and brought the Dutch to their knees. But very soon there were new combatants in the arena.

The new alliances.

The military events of the year 1673 are unimportant in comparison with the diplomatic movements. Maestricht fell into the hands of the King: Turenne made himself master of all the towns on the lower Meuse: the supremacy of the French arms remained unquestioned. But this very supremacy was alarming to Europe. The first decisive movement came from Frederick William of Brandenburg. The hereditary policy of his State was friendship with France, but his Protestant feelings were outraged by the spectacle of the destruction of Holland—the great bulwark and champion of Protestantism—by Catholic France. "The scent of the lilies," it was said, "was growing too strong in Germany." He appealed to the Empire, calling attention to the insults that it was receiving from

Louis, and to the fact that, while French troops made German soil a basis for their attack on Holland, German states on the Rhine seemed to be transferring their allegiance from the Emperor to the King of France. But the Emperor did not move until overtures were made to him from Spain. Spain could not see without intense alarm the progress of the French arms. The designs of the French on the Spanish provinces were well known, and if Holland fell into the hands of France what could prevent their accomplishment? Though Spain was exhausted, the situation gave the victory to the war party. The Emperor was brought over, and on 28 August, 1673, the alliance of the Empire, Spain, Holland, and Brandenburg, for resistance to France, became an accomplished fact. Somewhat later Denmark, Saxony, and other German States, threw in their lot with the allies. Sweden was soon the only ally of France. The situation then became what it remained to the end of the reign of Louis XIV. France found herself, with few allies, opposed to a great European coalition determined to weaken or to destroy her power for aggression in Europe. In subsequent years England became one of the most energetic members of that coalition, though for the present she was an ally of France. But that alliance was fast breaking down. English sympathy turned toward the Dutch Protestants in their extremity: English commerce was in danger of being ruined by the new alliance between the Empire, Spain, and Holland if England remained hostile to that alliance. In February, 1674, peace was declared between Holland and England.

The war develops into a great Continental struggle.

The position was now entirely changed. In 1672 France seemed on the point of delivering the *coup de grâce* to Holland. In 1674 she had to stand on the defensive against a very dangerous series of attacks. Yet the skill of her commanders, the steadiness and valour of her troops, never showed to such great advantage as under these circumstances of difficulty. During 1674–1675 there were three theatres of war. In

the first place Louis XIV, anxious to anticipate an attack through Franche Comté, threw himself upon that province. It could offer no effective resistance. Besançon and Dôle were captured. The province fell entirely into the power of France, and has remained in her power ever since (1674). In the second place the Dutch and Spanish troops tried to force their way into France through the Western Netherlands. The Prince of Condé was posted near Charleroi; but the army of the allies marched past without venturing to attack him and pushed for the French frontier. Condé immediately followed, and the armies met in August, 1674, at Senef. The French army crushed one part of the allied army at Senef, and, after much hard fighting, drove another part out of the Priory of St Nicholas. There remained the Prince of Orange in a village called Le Fay. He was strongly posted, and, though the conqueror of Rocroy urged on the attack with all his old fire, the troops at last refused to answer to his call, and the French had to fall back after a loss to both sides of about 7000 men. Both sides claimed the victory. It was at least a great thing for the allies that William of Orange had met the French veterans under one of their most distinguished commanders and had not been defeated. The allies undertook the siege of Oudenarde immediately afterwards, but were driven off, and only succeeded in capturing Grave. The third area of conflict was Alsace. There Turenne, with a considerable French force, was intrusted with the very difficult task of keeping a much larger Imperial and German force from penetrating into France. The campaign that followed is judged to be Turenne's masterpiece. He had formerly been accused of over-carefulness; but here he boldly met the enemy with his inferior forces, and by reason of his tactical ability, his thorough utilization of the advantages that the features of the country gave him, and the thorough discipline and confidence of his troops, he was able to gain his object. The passage commanded by Strassburg was in the hands of the enemy, and they penetrated Alsace in such

numbers that Louvois ordered Turenne to retire. But Turenne disregarded the orders and justified his disregard by his success. Rapidly marching through roads encumbered by snow, he unexpectedly attacked and defeated the German forces and drove them out of Alsace with a loss of nearly 40,000 men (Jan. 1675). The campaign of 1674 is counted as one of the most glorious in the military annals of France. She had resisted with very inferior numbers invasions at three points on her frontiers, for the Spaniards had attacked from the South as well as the Dutch and Imperialists from the North and North-east. Everywhere victory had crowned her arms. Franche Comté had been annexed, the possession of Alsace confirmed, and the military prestige of the French arms reached its very highest point. Turenne's return to Paris was a triumphal entry. The King and all classes of society thanked him for having saved France from invasion. He was called with justice the greatest of French Marshals, and his modesty and quiet dignity combined to make him the hero of the hour. But his career was nearly at an end. He returned to Alsace in the spring of 1675 and, in July of the same year, was about to give battle at Salzbach to the army of Montecuculi, the Imperial General. While observing the position of a battery he was killed by a cannon-ball. The grief of his own soldiers, to whose comforts he had carefully attended, and whose lives he had as far as possible spared, taken together with the unfeigned and lasting sorrow expressed by Madame de Sevigné in her letters to her daughter, give us the measure of his popularity both in camp and court. Condé took his place, and succeeded in arresting the advance of the Imperial troops: but this campaign was his last as well as Turenne's. He retired after it to Chantilly, and there found his chief enjoyment in the society of artists and men of letters down to his death in 1686.

With the year 1676 the prospects of the French grew somewhat brighter. Sweden was induced to attack Brandenburg, and though the attack was defeated it served to call off

this powerful opponent from France. Louis XIV entered also into friendly relations with Turkey, Poland, and Hungary, whereby enemies were raised up in the rear of the coalition and its power for offensive action against France weakened. In this year too the French also gained a remarkable victory on an element that had not hitherto been friendly to them; for, though no longer assisted by the English, they inflicted on the Dutch fleet more than one severe defeat. The coasts of Sicily were the scene of the struggle. Messina, finding her constitution encroached on by the Spanish government, threw off her allegiance to Spain and appealed to France. The Spaniards on the other hand called upon the Dutch for naval help in crushing this rebellion. De Ruyter commanded the Dutch fleet; the French ships were nominally under the command of the Duke de Vivonne, who was assisted by Duquesne and Tourville, the greatest of all the sailors whom the new naval efforts of France produced. Three naval battles were fought, one near the Isles of Stromboli without decisive issue, another off Syracuse, where the allies were heavily defeated and de Ruyter himself perished. A third, fought at Palermo, ended in the almost complete destruction of the allied fleet (1676). France was mistress of the Mediterranean, and she used this short period of naval supremacy to seize from the Dutch Tobago and Senegal. At no time in her history has her naval prestige stood so high.

In comparison with the vigorous efforts of the preceding years the war languished during the year 1677. France had an almost uninterrupted record of victory in the war; but her finances were beginning to give way under the strain. Much of the good results of the economies of Colbert was beginning to disappear. Again the provinces complained of ruinous taxation. There were risings of the people against the taxes in Brittany, Normandy, and Bordeaux, which were repressed with very great severity and left in the minds of the peasants a long resentment against the government. Yet the year was not

without important events. Créquy defeated the German forces once again in Alsace. In the Netherlands the siege of Valenciennes was undertaken: Louis XIV was present, but the army was commanded by Luxemburg, and Vauban superintended the siege operations. Vauban dispensed with the usual mining operations but made a practicable breach by cannon fire, and when all was ready for assault he urged that the attack should be delivered in the daytime, not, as had hitherto been usual, under the cover of darkness. His plan was adopted and the city was stormed. Its fall was followed by that of Cambrai and Saint Omer. William of Orange in vain attempted to interpose, but was defeated by the Duke of Orléans with great loss at Cassel.

In the next year (1678) it is again diplomacy which chiefly claims our attention; for England, which had been at peace with Holland since 1674, now threw in her lot with the allies. This was done in spite of the opposition of Charles II, who spoke of himself as "a fortress assailed by enemies to whom he could offer no resistance." The religious sympathy and the commercial jealousy of the English now told in the same direction. At the beginning of the year an offensive and defensive alliance was made between England and Holland, and the alliance was strengthened by the marriage of the Stadtholder William to Mary the niece of the reigning English King and daughter of his successor.

The Peace of Nimeguen.

Doubtless France could still have continued to struggle against the Coalition. But financial difficulties made Louis prefer a peace which was certain to give him great prestige and considerable increase of territory: and the allies very readily accepted his invitation to treat of terms. William of Orange made an effort to break off the negotiations by attacking Marshal Luxemburg near Mons after the armistice had been agreed upon, but after six hours' desperate fighting he was beaten off. The treaty of Nimeguen was ratified in September 1678. The general results of the

treaty were as follows: Holland, threatened at the beginning with entire ruin, emerged from the war without losing an acre of territory: Spain lost considerably, though her position in the Netherlands was not so bad as it would have been if she had been enclosed there, according to Louis' first proposal to the Dutch, between French fortresses both to the North and South: France strengthened her frontiers by the addition of territory very valuable both for purpose of offence and defence.

It is only to these French gains that we need look in detail. Most important of all, Franche Comté was now definitely annexed to France: its acquisition closed a dangerous gate of entry into France. On the Northern frontier France acquired a line of most valuable fortresses; Saint Omer, Aire, Ypres, Cambrai, Valenciennes, Condé, Bouchain, Maubeuge. These fortresses were carefully strengthened by Vauban and served as an extra coat of mail over the most vulnerable spot in the defences of France. By the treaty with the Emperor the Peace of Westphalia was declared to be verbally binding on all parties except in so far as changes were introduced into it by the new treaty. These changes were, first, that France took Freiburg in exchange for Philipsburg; and secondly, that Longwy and Nancy in Lorraine were definitely ceded to France. The Duke of Lorraine refused to recognize this cession, and so could not return to his Dukedom, which remained in the possession of the French till the Peace of Ryswick (1697). It did not finally pass into their hands until 1766.

Louis XIV had not gained all that he had hoped to gain when he began the war, and the future was to show that the rise of William of Orange to supreme authority in Holland was a counterpoise to all the French gains. For William henceforth stood always in the way of Louis, an antagonist whose vigilance could not be eluded and whose tenacity of purpose was never diminished by defeat. But France rejoiced in the glorious peace without suspecting any evil results. Her armies had more than maintained their great reputation, while her navies

had acquired one. All their glory seemed to emanate from the King of France, and when in 1680 the magistrates of Paris saluted him with the title of "Le Grand," they were but giving expression to the general feeling of the nation.

The Reunions.

The gains that had accrued to France in this war were considerable, though they were far from being in proportion to the efforts and sacrifices that had been made. But when peace had been secured, when Europe saw with delight the prospect of a period of repose from harassing wars, when even the French Government had disbanded a considerable portion of its troops, Louis began to see an opportunity of making in peace and under the cover of a quasi-legal procedure greater acquisitions than he had been able to make in war. Here as throughout his reign Louis is the real ruler of France; but here as throughout his reign we may trace the results of some strong influence upon him. The influence in this instance was that of Louvois. France had owed much to the untiring energy of this man. It was he who had introduced into the army the stricter discipline and the improved weapons and methods. Above all, it was through his vigilance and care of details that the armies of France had been so well provided with munitions of war and so excellently supported by the commissariat. But his interest extended beyond his own special department, and after the death of Lionne in 1671 he was, under the King, the chief agent of French diplomacy. His skill and energy were as clear in this department as in his own; but he tended to rely too little upon finesse, too much on vigour, and even on brutality. He was apt to think that every diplomatic knot could be cut by the sword, and the result was to increase enormously the suspicion with which the policy of France was regarded.

The opportunity that seemed now to present itself of gaining territory without conquest depended on the treaties which had determined the frontier of France. The chief of these, and that upon which all the others depended, was that of

Westphalia (1648). We have already seen (vol. I, p. 273) how full it was of ambiguities, how it neither defined the extent of the 'districts' that were ceded along with Metz, Toul, and Verdun, nor the 'country and rights' which passed to the King of France along with the ten cities of Alsace. The treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nimeguen both confirmed the terms of the Peace of Westphalia, but they did not define those points in it which had been left vague. This vagueness had not been altogether unintentional: the French diplomatists had seen that it might be used by France as a means for further aggressions in the future.

The time to use it had now come. The treaties seemed to admit that besides the territories actually occupied by the French there were others which rightly belonged to her. Accordingly, Louvois began "to pursue in peace the work of war, to conquer without fighting, to expand in the name of treaties frontiers that those treaties had fixed." Whatever the nature of the French claims, the method of insisting on them was inequitable to the last degree. Appeal was made to no neutral tribunal but directly to French courts. At Metz a separate "Chamber of Reunion" was established to consider the question of the "reunion" to France of the districts depending on the Bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. At Besançon the existing Parlement and at Breisach the "Superior Council" were asked to consider how far the claims of the Crown of France extended in Franche Comté and Alsace respectively. Documentary evidence extending far back into the early middle ages was examined; the powers in occupation were summoned; and then large districts were adjudged to France. Saarbrück and three other towns belonging to the Electorate of Trier; Lauterburg belonging to the Bishopric of Speier; Montbéliard belonging to the Duke of Würtemberg; Zweibrücken belonging to the King of Sweden, were thus handed over to France. More important still, the court at Breisach declared that the "whole of Upper and Lower Alsace" belonged

to the King of France, and this could be made to include the all-important city of Strassburg. But Louis XIV's ambition soared even beyond these acquisitions. Without any legal pretext of "reunion" he determined to seize Luxemburg and Casale. The attention of Europe had not been keenly aroused so long as the acquisitions consisted of unimportant towns and agricultural districts; but when Louis proceeded to lay hands on three prominent European fortresses—Luxemburg, Strassburg, and Casale—the situation was changed. These were among the most important fortresses in Europe. Luxemburg stood near the Moselle and commanded the entry to Lorraine and the Three Bishoprics. Strassburg commanded the great gate of entry for German troops into Alsace: if it, with its adjacent country, were in the hands of the King, Franche Comté would be safe and Lorraine would become more than ever dependent on France. The occupation of Casale was even more significant. It had little value as a defence, for Pinerolo commanded the entry to France: its occupation therefore revealed a new ambition in the French King for Italian conquest. Strassburg saw with some alarm the gradual advance of the French forces; but her garrison was small, some of her magistrates were certainly corrupt, and even her few cannon unsupplied with powder. Louis XIV went into Alsace with Louvois and was rather disappointed to find there was to be no resistance: for the place capitulated without a blow (30 Sept. 1681). Her old privileges were guaranteed to her and the Protestant faith was to be protected, though the Cathedral was handed over to the Catholics. Casale fell on the same day. Here too negotiations, not of the most honest kind, preceded the blow and no resistance was offered to the army of Boufflers and Catinat.

Europe looked on with indignation at these conquests made in time of peace, and with a pretence of legality which rendered them all the more offensive. The attack on Luxemburg, begun in Nov. 1681, specially

The truce of Ratisbon.

infuriated Spain; the occupation of Strassburg and the other acts of "reunion" directly affected and menaced the Empire. But the hour did not admit of united action against France. Spain declared war by herself, but she found no allies and had in the end to submit to the loss of Luxemburg, which fell in June 1684, and of other territory. In Germany several of the electoral states were subsidised by France. The Empire itself was threatened by a very dangerous attack of the Turks upon Vienna and by Hungarian troubles. Sweden, driven from her alliance with France by attacks on territories that she claimed on the Rhine, joined with Holland, Spain, Saxony, Bavaria and other German powers and founded in 1682 an alliance for resistance to the aggressions of Louis, which however, though it subsequently developed into the League of Augsburg, produced no immediate effect. When, therefore, Louis proposed to the Diet of Ratisbon that they should accept a truce of twenty years which should leave him in practical possession of Strassburg, Casale and Luxemburg but should not recognise his title to these possessions as valid, the Diet accepted the proposal as the best road out of a difficult situation. Never was an Imperial Diet so humbled before France as on this occasion. The procedure was, as a rule, of the most ceremonious and halting description: the delegates were accustomed "to spend months in examining a passport and five or six more in deciding whether the proceedings were to be conducted in Latin or German or French." But Louis forced his way through all the entanglements of etiquette. He fixed a date after which his proposals would be withdrawn; and at the same time Marshal Schomberg marched with a force of 30,000 men into Alsace. There were questions that the Diet would have liked to wrangle over; but the situation was a dangerous one and the document was signed just before midnight on the day appointed (Aug. 15, 1683). Spain could not hold out by herself: her King had indeed talked about never sheathing his sword till he had had a full revenge, but the fall of

Luxemburg and the cruel bombardment of Genoa, then in alliance with Spain, made him also yield to France (1684).

The truce of Ratisbon marks the very zenith of the power of Louis XIV. He acted in every direction as if he had some superiority of right over the monarchs of the earth, and he found his claim everywhere allowed or enforced. But meanwhile all Europe had become his enemy and was waiting for an opportunity of pouring upon him its accumulated rage. The opportunity soon came: but before it came he himself, by his religious policy, had inflicted upon France a blow which materially decreased her power of effective resistance.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE REIGN.

THE religious history of Louis XIV's reign is closely connected with his external policy, and even with the course of his wars. But it also presents a coherent policy, and it seems best, therefore, here to depart from the chronological order of the reign, and to narrate it in a single chapter.

We have, in a former chapter, said something of the general characteristics of Louis XIV as a statesman: but his private life also had a considerable influence upon affairs of State, and calls, therefore, for some notice. When Louis, in 1659, married Maria Theresa of Spain, the union was obviously dictated purely by considerations of diplomacy and statecraft: for it was well known that the King's inclination attracted him very strongly to Mazarin's niece, Marie Mancini. Between the King and his wife there was never any possibility of much sympathy. She was not only Spanish by birth, but even on the throne of France she seems to have felt more keenly for her old than for her new home. She was devoted to the King, but she had little delight in the round of splendid pleasures that marked the early years of his reign, and she was a true Spanish princess in her devotion to all observances of religion. It is not surprising

Louis XIV's private life.

to find that Louis XIV followed the custom of most of his predecessors on the French throne, and gave to successive mistresses an acknowledged place at Versailles. Mademoiselle de la Vallière was the first to occupy a position that was sought for by many, and, outside of clerical circles, hardly regarded as humiliating. From 1662 to 1670 hers was the chief influence over the private life of the King. Great beauty, charm of manner, and sweetness of disposition sufficed to maintain her influence with him, but in many ways she was singularly unfitted to maintain her position at Court: her conscience was not easy; the religious life was always attractive to her; and when at last she found her power waning and a rival preferred before her, it was chiefly her genuine devotion to the King that made her regret it. When the victory of that rival was assured, she became an inmate of a Carmelite Nunnery, coming, she said, to find there the peace she had not been able to find in the Palace, and to resign that liberty of which she had always made a bad use. Her place was taken by Madame de Montespan, who maintained her sway from 1670 to 1679. Bossuet and other leaders of the clergy protested against the position accorded to her, but their protest was in vain. She was in very many ways a great contrast to Louise de la Vallière; she retained the King's affection by the brightness and liveliness of her conversation, as well as by her beauty, and at times almost claimed it as a right. She bore several children to the King, and the gossip of the Court said they held a place in his affections higher than that held by his legitimate offspring. Her overthrow came from an unexpected quarter.

When Madame de Montespan was seeking for a governess for her children, she offered the post to Madame Scarron (*née* Françoise d'Aubigné), with whom she had already been for some time intimately acquainted. Madame Scarron was a granddaughter of the old Huguenot leader, Agrippa d'Aubigné. Her worthless father had belonged to the same creed, and she herself had been brought up in it. Her father had dissipated

all his wealth, and had at one time emigrated to Martinique with his daughter, in the hope of improving his position, but soon returned. On the journey his daughter, for whom so extraordinary a career was preparing, so nearly perished that preparations were actually made for her burial. On her return to France she became a convert to Catholicism, and being left by her father without means, readily accepted, in her seventeenth year, the hand of the kindly and clever hunchback Scarron, the most popular writer of burlesques of the time. As the mistress of his household she became known to a considerable circle in Paris, and gained a reputation for social and conversational powers. Scarron's death left her with some means but without definite employment. The offer of the post of governess to the King's children was, therefore, a very tempting one, but she refused it until she was personally solicited to accept it by the King himself. Her character, sympathetic, firm and quiet, gave her a great influence over the children, and soon Madame de Montespan found that they were more devoted to their teacher than to their mother. The King naturally saw much of her in her new post, and at first was rather repelled by her reputation for learning and her coldness. But the repulsion soon changed into a very strong attraction. It is alleged that the King was willing to give her the position then held by Madame de Montespan. But if such an offer was made it was refused: her care for her reputation was always a very strong motive with her, and preserved her here and always from any *faux pas*. But the friendship between the King and the governess of his children grew closer. In 1675, the children whose education she had undertaken were declared legitimate, and she herself was presented at Court, with the title of the Marquise de Maintenon. Madame de Montespan saw her growing influence with bitter jealousy. There were violent scenes between the two women, and fierce outbursts of passion even in the King's presence. But such violence served still further to turn the King away from

Madame de Montespan. At last the breach between the King and his mistress became an open one: Madame de Montespan was dismissed from the Court. Her place was not taken by Madame de Maintenon; but her influence over the King became very great, and it was all thrown on the side of sobriety and decorous conduct, and above all, of piety. The tone of the Court became changed. It lost much of its old brilliance and reckless gaiety. Piety became the vogue; those who were hunting for place and preferment were careful to be regular in their attendance in their Royal Chapel; Saint Simon tells us several stories of the eagerness and hypocrisy with which the courtiers crowded in when the King was present, and absented themselves when he was not. There were many good results of the change: one especially. Madame de Maintenon succeeded in reconciling the King to his much injured wife. But Maria Theresa died in 1683, shortly after the reconciliation. In 1684, the vacant place was filled in all but name by the ex-Huguenot, for in 1684 a ceremony secretly performed, but formal and binding, made Françoise Scarron, Marquise de Maintenon, wife of the King of France.

Her influence did much to turn Louis XIV's thoughts to piety, and his policy in the direction of religious affairs; but it cooperated with a tendency that had long been observable in Louis. His ignorance on religious matters was indeed great, and it was equalled by his blind prejudice, but none the less there had always been in him a fibre on which religious influences could work with effect. And now Madame de Maintenon came to reinforce this religious tendency which had been strengthening with his years. It was very natural that that influence should be exaggerated by Court rumour: her position and power at Court were so strange and undefined that anything said about her seemed possible. As a matter of fact her influence seems to have been chiefly indirect. The King was accustomed regularly to transact State business in her apartment, and in her presence: her opinion was occasionally but

not formally asked, and her power over the King's mind was all the greater because the pressure was never felt. Soon the Court found that she was the best channel through which to approach the King, and in appointments, especially in religious appointments, her wish was often effective. She surrounded the King with an atmosphere, and he submitted to its influence without perceiving its existence. But it is an injustice to her and an exaggeration of her position to think that she dictated the King's policy even in religious matters. She was in no way answerable for his measures of persecution. The most that can be said is that of many influences that concentrated to produce in the King an interest in religious affairs, and a zeal for orthodoxy, hers was among the most important.

The condition of the Church in France.

The Church in France at the time when Louis XIV began to pay an earnest attention to its affairs was in the highest degree prosperous and influential. It may indeed be doubted whether since the time of the Reformation any ecclesiastical body has possessed such vast intellectual and social prestige, as the French branch of the Roman Catholic Church in the reign of Louis XIV. Its wealth was enormous and its political influence considerable, and some of the strongest intellects of France were to be found among its leaders. All danger from the Protestant Movement had passed; the first murmurings of the rationalism that became so powerful in the eighteenth century were hardly heard. The ecclesiastical writers of Louis XIV's reign are never apologetic in tone: they assume the justice and truth of their cause, and make dangerous attacks on the positions of the enemy. Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, is reckoned the greatest of French preachers, and was certainly possessed of an eloquence of extraordinary strength and dignity. We have seen already his effort to present the course of European history as a coherent whole. In his work on *The Protestant Variations* he showed the wide differences of creed among Protestants, and in his *Exposition of the Catholic Creed*

he tried to present Catholicism in such a way as to draw over, if possible, the Huguenots of France. But he was not only a writer and a preacher; he was also a powerful ecclesiastical statesman, and is by some reckoned the last that the Roman Church produced. His influence on the King was at all times considerable, and when he was made tutor to the Dauphin, it seemed as if his influence on public affairs might in the future be greater still; but the Dauphin did not live to show in action how far he had imbibed the teaching of Bossuet or was willing to follow his precepts. At all times Bossuet strongly supported the system of the absolute Monarchy, and his obsequiousness to Louis XIV is perhaps the gravest charge that can be brought against him. Fénelon doubtless stands far below Bossuet in intellectual power, but his sweetness of temper and his sympathy with the suffering people of France make him, to many, a more attractive figure. We shall see him later on, calling attention to the miseries inflicted on the people by Louis XIV's wars of conquest or ambition. He was tutor to the grandson of Louis XIV—the much loved Duke of Burgundy—and gained an immense ascendancy over the mind of his pupil. We get some notion of the direction in which he tried to influence the Duke of Burgundy by the works which he composed for him, and especially by the *Télémaque*, which everywhere shows a preference for the work of peace over that of war, urges the claims of the people to the consideration of their governors, and often presents the charms of a simple and uncivilised life in a manner that reminds us of the teaching of Rousseau. These names do not complete the list of the great clerics of the age. Bourdaloue was a preacher and controversialist of the highest gifts. Fleury wrote an Ecclesiastical History that is not quite antiquated even now. Tillemont wrote a History of the Roman Emperors which Gibbon's work has not entirely displaced. Enough has however been said to show the intellectual strength of the Church. The interest taken by society in ecclesiastical matters is

nowhere better shown than in the letters of Madame de Sévigné, in which items of clerical news seem to rival court gossip in interest, and the latest theological works are represented as being eagerly read by a large circle. The Church, then, which the next reign was to see so deeply degraded and humiliated, was, during the reign of Louis XIV, learned, prosperous and triumphant. We may notice in conclusion as a fact that explains much both in this reign and the next, that there is no one in the Church, not the wise Bossuet nor the tender-hearted Fénelon, who seems to have accepted religious toleration as a principle.

Gallican Liberties.

Much of Louis XIV's policy in religious matters may be traced to that absolutist temperament which we have seen acting so powerfully in foreign and military affairs. He would brook no other authority in France but his own, whether in matters civil or ecclesiastical. He assumed indeed religious as well as secular power. A clerical assembly in 1682 called him *in ecclesia plus quam sacerdos*, and the phrase seems to have reflected his own feeling in the matter. In the *Mémoires* that he wrote for his son he insists that the clergy equally with the laity are submitted in their persons and in their property to the power of the King. He was throughout his reign in continual friction with the Papacy, and was quite ready to support the efforts of the French clergy, to define and limit the authority of the Pope within the boundaries of France.

The claims of Rome to complete ecclesiastical dominion in France had earlier in the reign of Louis XIV found many to resist them. Bossuet, anxious as usual to steer a middle course between opposing fanaticisms, partly led, partly controlled this opposition to ultramontane claims. At one time the struggle seemed to centre round the translation of a portion of a single verse of the New Testament. Was St John xviii. 36 to be translated absolutely "My kingdom is not of this world," or was the particle to be emphasised and the meaning rendered, "My kingdom is not now of this world," as though it implied

that it was eventually to become so? The matter was argued with seriousness and even with passion, but more important and political questions soon demanded solution.

The régale.

A long-standing custom gave the King of France the power, in the case of a bishopric standing vacant, to enjoy the episcopal revenues during the vacancy, and dispose as he thought fit of all benefices depending on the bishopric. This power (the *régale*) was not disputed for the greater part of France, but the four great provinces of the south —Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiné—had hitherto been exempt from its action. In 1673 Louis, supported by his council and by Parlement, proclaimed the extension of the rights of the *régale* to these hitherto exempted provinces. In the provinces themselves there was not much resistance. Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, and Caulet, Bishop of Pamiers, alone denied the power of the King; and the resistance of these two bishops was discounted by their sympathy with the Jansenists, who in this matter ranged themselves on the side of the Pope, while the Jesuits were among the warmest defenders of the royal claims. From Rome a very spirited protest was made, and Innocent XI even threatened to have recourse to excommunication. The clerical leaders in France urged Louis to call a National Assembly of the Clergy to decide these difficult points. Louis was already friendly to the clerical leaders, and his friendliness was increased by the readiness and liberality with which they had voted funds to him in 1675 for his military requirements. The National Assembly was summoned in Nov. 1681 and was dismissed in March 1682. Bossuet was the leading spirit. The right of the King to the *régale* was recognised by all, though the King consented to have his right of presentation limited to properly qualified persons. In this form it was resisted by none but the Jansenists. Then came

Declaration of Gallican Liberties.

the declaration of the relation between the Church in France and the Papal authority. It was voted on March 19, 1682, and laid down

the following principles. (1) It was declared that the authority of the Pope was limited to spiritual matters; that the royal authority was in no way dependent upon the Papacy; that the Popes had no right to depose Kings, or to dispense subjects from their duty of obedience. The controverted words from St John's Gospel were interpreted as denying temporal authority to the Church. (2) The decisions of the Council of Constance were maintained; the opinion of those who regarded them as temporary, and only of valid application to the period of the Great Schism, was denounced. (3) The rules, customs and constitutions hitherto accepted in France were declared to be still and for ever binding upon the Papacy in its dealings with the Church in France. (4) It was laid down that "although the Pope has the principal part in all questions of faith, and his decrees regard all Churches, still his judgment is not absolutely final (*irréformabile*) until it has received the general consent of the Church."

The Pope had fiercely attacked the decision with regard to the *régale*, and declared that it covered the French Bishops "with eternal shame." It seemed that a fierce struggle was to be expected over the Declaration; some even talked of an approaching separation of the Gallican Church from Rome. But Louis, having gained what he wanted from the Assembly, dismissed it; and so the struggle smouldered on without breaking into an open flame. But after what had occurred it is not surprising to find that Louis again and again saw his European plans resisted by the diplomacy of the Roman see. Innocent XI threatened Louis with "the vengeance of Heaven," and supported the plans of William of Orange against him. It was only upon Innocent's death that friendly relations could be re-established between France and the Papacy.

The Protestants of France and the Revocation of the

The struggle between the Gallican Church and the Papal authority brought no prospect of relief to the Protestants of France. On the contrary, dangers were now accumulating round them from various

Edict of Nantes.

sides. The toleration hitherto accorded to the Protestants in France by the Edict of Nantes placed France far ahead of all European countries in respect of humanity and enlightened religious statesmanship, and had in every way strengthened her hands, in diplomacy, in war, and in industry. But immense as is the credit due to France in making this first great attempt in religious toleration, it had always been, for the vast majority, a concession to circumstance rather than the result of principle or humane feeling. The clergy had resisted it in the first instance and they were still far from being reconciled to it. It was impossible indeed that they should be. To those convinced of the absolute and exclusive truth of their own creed, heresy must always be a crime, and toleration at best a piece of opportunism. The clergy of France had constantly protested against the generous policy of Henry IV and Richelieu, and these protests grew more vigorous and confident after the accession of Louis XIV to power. In 1660 the General Assembly of the Clergy had demanded a law to forbid the conversion of Catholics, severe penalties against relapses, the exclusion of Protestants from public employments, the destruction of all teaching establishments directed by Protestants. In the next assembly, that of 1665, the same demands were made, together with one for the dissolution of the "courts of the Edict" and the mixed courts that had been established as a guarantee for Protestants. In 1670 it was urged that no Protestants should be allowed to teach, but that all should contribute to Catholic institutions; and the atrocious demand was made that children at the age of seven should be allowed to declare themselves converted and to leave their parents' house. In 1675 the foregoing demands were reiterated. Further, mixed marriages were to be prohibited; Protestant ministers were to pay the *taille*; synods were to be forbidden. In 1685, after other demands, it was declared outright "that Protestants should not be allowed to perform the ceremonies of their religion on the lands and

domains of the King:" that is to say the Edict of Nantes was to be annulled. The hostility of the clergy had been a constant feature of the danger: but after 1680 it was reinforced by others. The change in the manner of the King's life and the influence of Madame de Maintenon told against them. As earlier Kings had been sent on crusades to atone for errors of early life, so Louis's confessor urged him to an attack upon the Protestant heresy. Even the quarrel with the Pope told in the same direction: the leaders of the Gallican movement wished to show that their championship of the National claims did not imply heresy.

The Protestant body was in no way dangerous to the absolute monarchy of France. Mazarin had spoken of them as his "faithful flock:" they had made no attempt to profit by the disorders of the Fronde: the political and aristocratic character, that had once belonged to the Protestant movement, had almost entirely disappeared. It is clear too that the religious zeal of the Protestants had waned since the 16th century: they were doubtless earnest and devoted still, but the contemporaries of Coligny would have met royal persecution with a more bitter and determined resistance than was found in 1685. But the Huguenots were not only innocuous to the Absolute Monarchy: they were on the contrary a strong support. Their number was reckoned at from one and a-half to two millions. They do not seem to have contributed anything of importance to the intellectual or literary movement of the time, but they were prominent and valuable in every domain of practical life. They were at last excluded from the highest military posts, and yet from their ranks had come Turenne, Schomberg, and Duquesne. No class in France contributed so much as they to the industrial life which Colbert had called into existence. Ironworks, paperworks, tanneries are mentioned as being entirely in their hands, but there was no department of industry where they were not active, and the commerce with England and Holland was very largely carried on by them.

For a long time past there had been continual encroach-

ments on their privileges. The public feeling had always been against them, and the Government had not always been anxious to resist its pressure. Even during the last years of Mazarin's *régime*, as the gradual settlement of public affairs gave the Government a sense of security, the Protestants found their position gradually undermined; but with Louis XIV's accession to power in 1660 the policy of the State became more systematically hostile to them. Louis XIV, in his memoirs (written about 1670), explains his feelings towards the Protestants and the policy he intends to adopt. He disclaims all intention of using violent remedies, which he declares to be useless in view of the wide extent of the heresy. He intends (he says) to maintain the privileges that his predecessors have granted to the Huguenots, but to interpret those privileges very strictly, and in all favours that depend on his own will to pass them over entirely. The first years of his reign bore the mark of this policy. In 1662 the Triennial General Synod of Protestants was forbidden. The Pays de Gex was declared not to come under the Edict, because it had been conquered subsequently to its passing. In 1663 banishment was decreed against all apostate Catholics and against all Protestants who having been converted to Catholicism relapsed to their old faith. In 1665 it was declared that boys at the age of 14 and girls at 12 might declare themselves Catholics and demand a pension from their parents; and a door was thus thrown wide open to priestly intrigue of the worst kind. In the same year Protestants were excluded from certain trades in certain districts.

In 1666 there came a little respite; for Colbert saw with despair the injury which was being done to his industrial projects by this oppression of the class in France that showed the strongest industrial leanings; and the Protestant Elector of Brandenburg, the ally of the French Crown, made strong representations in favour of his co-religionists. There ensued an almost entire cessation of persecution from 1666 to 1674; and some even entertained the hope that a reunion of the

Christians of France might be effected,—a hope rudely dispelled by the reply of the Huguenot synods.

With 1674 the pressure began again to be exercised. One of the chief agencies was the Treasury for Conversions, established in 1676, on the suggestion of Pellisson, himself formerly a Protestant. A fund was formed, and money was put at the disposal of the bishops for the purchase of conversions. The Dutch war was raging; the poverty was great, and the means employed produced a large crop of conversions; but the faith of these converts naturally proved unstable, and had to be supported by measures of increased severity against relapses. The bishops competed with one another in lengthening the lists of converts which they sent up to Government and in reducing the cost of their conversion. But it was not until the year 1679 that the Government began to aim its most deadly and most carefully planned blows against the enemy. The Peace of Nimeguen had been signed in 1678: it was, therefore, no longer so necessary for France to consider the susceptibilities of possible Protestant allies. Madame de Montespan's influence was almost gone, and Madame de Maintenon's was growing stronger every month: it is in October 1679, that she writes in often quoted words "The King acknowledges his weakness and recognises his faults. He is thinking seriously of the conversion of the heretics, and soon earnest efforts will be made to achieve it" (*on y travaillera tout de bon*). There was some question of the means to be employed, and a party at Court deprecated all violence. But Bossuet supported strong measures with his powerful authority. "Those," he wrote, "who do not approve of the King using force in the matter of religion, on the ground that religion ought to be free, are guilty of blasphemy and error." Madame de Maintenon herself seems to have felt sympathy for the religious body to which she had once belonged; but to have interfered in their behalf would have exposed her to misrepresentation: she admitted that "God employed all means."

The Protestants were thus left without a defender. The method of attack varied from place to place, and it was often dependent on the feeling of the people or the bias of the *intendants*. It is therefore difficult to present a coherent picture of the progress of the siege down to the delivery of the final blow. The encroachment upon the privileges of the Protestants grew more and more systematic. A declaration of June, 1681, lowered to seven years the age at which the children of Protestants might declare themselves converted to Catholicism. Churches that had in any way contravened the Edict, as for instance by admitting a convert, were demolished. The care of the sick was taken from Protestants; they were not allowed to be either lawyers or doctors: all official careers were closed to them: they were not allowed to become masters of guilds: the financial work of the State was taken completely from them, though they had done great part of it previously. While life was thus made intolerable to them and all careers were blocked in France, they were not allowed to seek a happier life abroad. During the last five years they had been emigrating in large numbers, especially to England, to Holland, and to Germany. But now more than one edict closed this refuge to them. The truculent order of 1682 forbade all Protestants to leave the country with their families on pain of life imprisonment in the galleys for the heads of the family. During the whole of 1682 and 1683 edict followed edict, destroying, with or without legal excuse, one or other of the liberties and rights of the Protestants. To all these pitiless measures of persecution there was little resistance, none indeed of any importance. In the southern provinces, in June, 1683, there was set on foot a secret scheme for a demonstration on a large scale, but of a peaceable nature. The Protestants were to show their feelings by publicly assembling for worship in those places where churches had been destroyed and religious exercises forbidden. As soon as the scheme was known, it was disavowed; but it gave the Government an excuse for using violence. Troops were sent against

the Protestants, and when they took up arms they were crushed with much loss of life. There had been no arming in the Cevennes; but the country was invaded and punished severely—a fact that must be remembered in justification of the popular rising against Louis's government in 1702.

All through these events, Louvois had been chiefly employed in the attack upon the Protestants; and his method and character are especially stamped upon the method that was most effective in "converting" the Protestants, the famous dragonnades. The persecution employed was never of the open and unashamed kind, of which the 16th century saw so much upon both sides: it paid throughout to the principle of toleration the compliment of hypocrisy, and Louis to the end disclaimed the use of violent methods. Louvois was the chief agent in employing a very subtle method of using force under cover of legality. The custom of quartering troops upon civilians was still regularly employed, and the financial burden of this quartering, as well as the insults inflicted on their hosts by the badly disciplined soldiery of the 17th century, was much feared. A system was devised whereby troops were sent into Protestant districts, and were there quartered wholly or chiefly on the Protestant inhabitants; and, while discipline was theoretically maintained, a vast amount of criminal licence was really allowed to the soldiery. It is very difficult to get any idea of the extent or amount of violence done by the soldiers, for exact statistical information is naturally unobtainable; but the action of the English Government in Ireland previous to and during the rising of 1798 was closely analogous, and we may probably infer from the accounts of that period what was happening in France. The system was first tried in 1681 by Marillac, in Poitou. Louvois informed him that the King's desire was to force the Huguenots to conversion (*violenter les Huguenots à se converter*), and Marillac acted up to the spirit of his instructions. So great was the outcry against the licence permitted, or ordered, by him, that the

Government had to disclaim responsibility, and finally to withdraw him; but not before a very large number of Protestants had been "converted." But it was not until the beginning of 1685 that these dragonnades were used on a general plan. Then Foucault, the *intendant* of Béarn, introduced the troops into his province. Fifteen of the twenty churches which still subsisted were at once destroyed, and subsequently the remaining five. The Protestant population trembled and yielded before the violence of the dragoons, and soon Foucault could announce that out of the 22,000 Protestants of Béarn, only a few hundreds remained unconverted. From Béarn the soldiers were marched into Guienne, into Saintogne, into Languedoc; and everywhere the same system was employed. The loss of property, the fear of outrage, the impossibility of resistance everywhere produced the same effects; the heart and courage of Protestantism seemed broken.

Most of the cruelties employed were concealed from Louis. He only heard of the submission of thousands upon thousands of Protestants, and was delighted with the religious glory with which he thought it would surround his reign. It was plain that most of the conversions could not be genuine; but perhaps he comforted himself with the reflection of Madame de Maintenon: "If the fathers are hypocrites the children at least will grow up good Catholics."

Protestantism then was represented to him as dead or dying, the creed of only a handful of foolish and obstinate persons. The entire revocation of the Edict, long regarded as the end towards which the religious policy of the King was tending, now came up for definite consideration. Two questions demanded careful preliminary investigation. First, was it possible to withdraw an Edict which was distinguished from all others by the epithet "*perpetual*," and to which the King had sworn as a permanent part of the Constitution? Secondly, what would the effect of the revocation be on foreign affairs, and especially on the relations of France with England?

A satisfactory answer was given to both questions. The King's "Council of Conscience," to which he was accustomed to appeal on ecclesiastical questions, removed his scruples on the first point; and the accession of James II, an avowed Catholic, to the throne of England in Feb. 1685 made it little likely that any serious protest was to be expected from that side. In the immediate circle of the King the only protest seems to have come from the Dauphin, who urged, with just insight, the danger of disturbance and of emigration. But he was overruled, and on Nov. 10, 1685, the famous Edict was revoked. In the official pronouncement on the subject it was declared that the cause of the Edict no longer existed, "since the best and largest part of our subjects of the so-called reformed religion have embraced the Catholic faith." The order followed for the destruction of all Protestant churches; for the banishment of all Protestant ministers, who were however to leave behind all their children over the age of seven; for the abolition of all Protestant schools; for the infliction of a fine of 500 livres on the parents of all children not baptized by the priest of the parish. No Protestant religious service of any sort was to be permitted: no Protestants were to be allowed to leave the country: the property of those who left it was to be confiscated. A last article declared that the few Protestants who remained would be allowed to reside in France "without being troubled or hindered on the pretext of their religion." The Act of Revocation was sent out into all the provinces without waiting for the registration by Parlement, whose assent was certain.

The Act of Revocation hurled France from the pinnacle on which she had hitherto stood, as the most tolerant of all European states. But with its publication the trouble was by no means over. The number of the "unconverted" was much greater than the King imagined, and they were encouraged by the last article, which seemed to imply freedom of conscience, at least to maintain their position with some boldness. Many, too, of the new

The Results of the Revocation.

converts were similarly encouraged to abstain from all the ceremonies of a religion which they had embraced under constraint. But the prospect of even this limited amount of toleration proved wholly illusory. The dragonnades were extended over the whole of France, and the system was now pursued more openly and more relentlessly than ever. Louvois says expressly that the soldiers are to be allowed to live "very licentiously." "His Majesty," he wrote to Boufflers, "decrees that every means shall be used to make it clear that no rest or mercy is to be expected by those who persist in a religion that displeases the King." And again with reference to the Protestants of Dieppe he wrote, "Since these people are distinguished by their refusal to submit to the King's desires, you need not observe in their case the restraints which have been prescribed to you, nor can you make too severe and burdensome the quartering of the troops upon them." The comment on these orders is to be found in the records of cruelties inflicted at Dieppe, at Orange, at Metz, in fact in all parts of France. Metz was given twenty-four hours to be converted and then came the dragoons: many of the obstinate Protestants were to be deported into France. In some instances tortures were applied which recalled the worst days of the 16th century. Such was the storm that broke over the head of the still unconverted. The measures that were used to force the newly converted to attend the ceremonies of the Church were almost as cruel and perhaps even more repulsive. "They were dragged," writes Saint Simon, "to adore what they did not believe in and to receive the divine body of the Holy of Holies whilst persuaded that they were only eating bread which they ought to abhor. From torture to abjuration and from that to the communion there was often only twenty-four hours' space, and the executioners themselves conducted the converts to mass and testified to their conversion."

The stream of emigration, which had begun to flow quite five years before the actual revocation, flowed quicker than ever

after that event. It was in vain that edicts were issued against it, in vain that the peasants were excited by rewards to seize all would-be emigrants. In spite of the punishments inflicted, the Protestants managed to evade the instruments of government and to pass every frontier. England, Holland, Brandenburg opened their arms to them. From Holland many passed to the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope, where their descendants are still to be found; and the impulse given to the growth of Berlin by their arrival in that city is a specially noteworthy and suggestive incident.

Vauban, whose reputation as a far-seeing and humane statesman deserves to outshine even that which belongs to him as soldier and engineer, thus summed up the total loss to France: (1) the desertion of from 80,000 to 100,000[1] persons of all conditions who carried with them more than 30 millions of livres; (2) the destruction of many arts and manufactures, and their transference to foreign and hostile countries; (3) the ruin of French commerce; (4) the navies of the enemy increased by 8,000 to 9,000 of the best sailors of France, and their armies by 10,000 to 12,000 soldiers and 500 or 600 officers, far better war material than anything up to that time possessed by the enemy.

France thus lost money and men, trade, commerce, soldiers and sailors by this ill-advised and cruel act. The next war was to show the importance of these losses, when Schomberg's sword was enlisted on the side of William III, and Huguenot regiments fought against France in Ireland and the Low Countries. The departure of these men of the Puritan stamp took also from France an element of moral strength that she could ill afford to part with. It is not pretended that the exiled Protestants could show on the whole greater intellectual power or nobler moral and spiritual qualities than were to be found

[1] This is certainly an underestimate if taken to apply to the whole emigration. Henri Martin calculates that from 200,000 to 250,000 is the most probable estimate.

in the Church of France: but their strength of character is shown by their willingness to suffer for their faith, and the next century was to prove that France suffered for the want of men of such fibre. The Revocation destroyed the system of Protestant alliances on which the strength of France had hitherto been built up, and increased the bitterness of her opponents in all Protestant countries. Even the object of religious unity was not attained except for a moment. Voltaire was born nine years after the Revocation, and soon after Louis' death the movement of eighteenth century rationalism brought into the field an enemy vastly more dangerous than Protestantism had ever been in the seventeenth century.

The persecution was not closely connected with the Papacy. If the King had applied to the Pope for advice he would probably have been recommended to adopt wiser and more humane courses. But if the blame is shifted from the Pope it falls all the more heavily on the clergy of France. We have seen their persistent demands for the Revocation. In 1682, in an address sent from all the clergy of France to the Pope, they claimed the acts of religious repression that had already taken place as the great glory of France and of her King. "Need we tell you," they said, "that the King hates all religious innovations, and that they can find no asylum in any part of his realm? Louis the Great is without doubt a second Maurice, and of him may be said what your predecessor, Saint Gregory, said of that Emperor, 'Heretics cannot open their lips in all his realm. Whatever dangerous sentiments they may entertain in their hearts, they cannot under so catholic a Prince put their thoughts into words.'" When the persecution was over and its evil consequences were seen, Bossuet could still exclaim that it raised Louis to rank with Theodosius and Charlemagne, and gave his reign its most characteristic feature. There have been many religious persecutions in history, both Catholic and Protestant, that have been more cruel; but the absence of all danger to the

persecuting party, the hypocrisy employed throughout, and the near approach of an era of general toleration, combine to make it one of the most odious on record.

The treatment of the Protestants by France is a far more important subject, and had a far greater influence on France than the Jansenist movement; but as this occupied much of the attention both of the King and of the nation, and indirectly contributed a good deal to the collapse of the Church in the next reign, it seems necessary to give at least an outline of this very tangled story.

The Government and the Jansenists.

The beginnings of the Jansenist movement have already been described in dealing with the movement of the Fronde. It was, as we have seen, very closely connected with the general resistance that was made to the royal authority during the minority of Louis XIV, and the last years of Mazarin's *régime* saw somewhat severe measures taken against the stubborn and earnest followers of Jansen. It is difficult to form any estimate of their numbers: but it is clear that besides the nuns and solitaries of Port Royal, who formed the nucleus of Jansenism, and the few bishops who were willing to defend its principles and to suffer for them, there was also a very large number of people scattered throughout France who, with different motives and to different extents, were influenced by the ideas of Jansen and Pascal, of Arnauld and St Cyran.

When Louis came to power in 1660, a stronger policy was quickly adopted with regard to these people whom their enemies called Jansenists, for they themselves refused to accept the title. The sympathy between Jansenism and political resistance to the Crown had been manifested again and again. In 1661, the formulary of 1652, condemning certain theses in Jansen's *Augustinus*, was republished, and its signature was demanded. A bitter theological battle followed as before, over the same narrow but important issue. The Jansenists, for so we must call them, declared their readiness to accept the

authority on the question of doctrine. Since the Pope declared that these statements were heresy, they acknowledged them to be heretical; but were they to be found in the *Augustinus*? They declared that the condemned doctrines were not to be found there; and the question therefore arose, whether the Pope's authority extended to questions of fact as well as of doctrine. Were they bound to admit that statements were in a book, which they themselves, for all their searching, could not find there? The Jesuits supported the doctrine of Papal Infallibility in its extremest form: the Pope's condemnation of Galileo's doctrine even found supporters. But such a doctrine found a strong resistance in the clergy of France, who protested against the extreme doctrine of Papal Infallibility in their statement of Gallican Liberties (1682); in the King himself, for it was plain that it could be made to cover political questions as well; and in the Parlements of France, always jealous of Papal interference. Nevertheless the task of procuring signatures to the formulary was proceeded with. In 1664, Péréfixe, formerly the King's tutor, was made Archbishop of Paris, and he exerted himself to the utmost to procure the settlement of the controversy. He found the most direct resistance among the nuns of Port Royal. They professed complete devotion to the Papal authority, but refused to sign a document positively affirming that certain doctrines were contained in a book written in a language that they could not understand, when those whose guidance they followed asserted that those doctrines were not to be found there. Many Jansenists fled from France. The nuns, still recalcitrant, were deprived of the sacraments and put under the direction of a new abbess; some of them were removed to other nunneries. No end was reached thereby. Pope Alexander VII appointed a commission to enquire into and settle the matter; but the temper of the King and clergy of France was as determined to resist the interference of the Pope as to maintain orthodoxy. The chief result of the commission was to bring the King

nearer to the Jansenists. In 1667 Alexander VII died, and was succeeded by Clement IX. This Pope was judged to be more amenable to compromise than his predecessor; and the Duchesse de Longueville addressed to him a letter earnestly entreating his sympathy on behalf of the tender consciences of the nuns of Port Royal. A road out of the difficulty was at last found. The Pope declared himself contented with the signature to the declaration so far as regarded the doctrine, and with "reverent silence" on the question of fact. So the "Peace of the Church" was re-established, and endured on this basis for more than thirty years.

But the position was untenable. Jansenism, as we have seen, meant before all things opposition to the Jesuit order. This order had great and increasing influence on the King. His confessors were always Jesuits, and the interval of peace saw little cessation in their hostility to the teaching and practice of the Jansenists. It was mainly due to them that the struggle broke out again in 1705.

By that time the religious situation in France had materially altered. The King's fanatical impulses had grown stronger. He had come to hate the name of Jansenism, and suspected its adherents of sympathy with the enemy, and treason against the Crown. A Jansenist, if we may believe Saint Simon, was more repulsive to him than an atheist. Their opposition to his wishes on the question of the *régale* had bitterly offended him, and he believed them to be half in league with the enemy during the course of the Succession War. Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, had expressed warm admiration for a book entitled *Moral Reflexions on the New Testament*, written by Quesnel, who was now the most prominent figure among the Jansenists. Between Cardinal de Noailles and Père La Chaise, the King's confessor, there was bitter and unconcealed hostility.

So it came to pass that in 1705 a new Papal Bull was procured (*Vineam Domini Sabaoth*), whereby the Pope declared

himself no longer contented with "reverent silence" on the question of fact. The signature of all must affirm, not only that the five theses were heretical, but also that they were contained in the *Augustinus*. The Bull found little or no resistance in France: Cardinal de Noailles was glad to give it free course in order to show that though he approved of a book written by a Jansenist, he had no sympathy with the Jansenist heresy. Only the nuns of Port Royal showed themselves in the humour for martyrdom. There were very few left, for no fresh admissions had been allowed for a long time past. In 1708 the nuns were removed and their buildings destroyed. In 1711 even their graveyard was ploughed up, and the bones of the buried removed. At the same time the chief leaders of Jansenist opinion were imprisoned or exiled by *lettres de cachet*.

It might have been thought that Jansenism would now become extinct. But the old ideas were still blown about France and still found adherents, and the Jesuits still pressed on to a complete victory and the extermination of their opponents. The last years of the King's life (for in order to give continuity to the story we pass far beyond the point at which the general narrative of the reign stopped in the last chapter) were troubled with the old controversy: but it grew more and more petty and contemptible. The centre of conflict was now Quesnel's *Moral Reflections on the New Testament*. Père La Chaise had been succeeded by Le Tellier as confessor to the King, and he pursued the contest with Noailles with pertinacity and bitterness. For Noailles had approved of Quesnel's book, and there were many things in that book which were declared to be tainted with Jansenism. Bossuet had proposed to correct the book, but his corrections were not accepted. Appeal was made to the Pope, and after long delay he published in 1713 the Bull *Unigenitus* expressly condemning 101 statements in the book. Noailles felt his reputation to be at stake and resisted strenuously. He refused to allow the publication of

the Bull in his diocese, and prepared to struggle against both Pope and King. Nearly all of the bishops were against him; but public opinion and the religious orders were on his side. The year 1714 passed in useless negotiation, and as the King had thrown all his influence on the side of the Bull the struggle seemed likely to be very serious. But the death of Louis XIV in 1715 threw power into the hands of a new party and relegated the decision of the question to the next reign, when it was to be fought out in an equally bitter spirit and with more contemptible weapons.

Madame Guyon and the Quietists.

This brings us to an end of those religious movements of Louis XIV's reign which can be said to have had a considerable influence on the development and life of the nation. But there is one other sufficiently interesting in itself to deserve a passing notice. Madame Guyon began about 1680 to attract attention by her religious ideas. She explained them in two books of which the chief was "A short and easy method of praying with the heart." The general tendency of her ideas was towards mysticism and the preference of contemplation and internal devotion over external ceremonies. Her enemies denounced her as holding opinions which had already been condemned by the Papacy under the name of Molinism or Quietism: members of the Society of Friends in England have found a close resemblance between her ideas and those of George Fox. She made the acquaintance of Fénelon, and he became fascinated with her views and her champion against her enemies. He introduced her book to Madame de Maintenon and through her to the King himself. At first the Court seemed interested and inclined to approve of Madame Guyon, and she was strongly supported not only by Fénelon but by Noailles, then recently appointed Archbishop of Paris. But Bossuet ranged himself on the opposite side, and the King, being induced to support him, soon threw great ardour into his opposition to the new ideas. Victory, so far as the official action of the Church was concerned, was

bound to rest with the side supported by Bossuet and the King. Madame Guyon retired into a monastery in the diocese of Meaux and subsequently was imprisoned at Vincennes. She passed personally out of the religious history of France; but her movement had given rise to a bitter contest between Fénelon and Bossuet. In the end the Pope was appealed to. He hesitated for a long time; and it was only after the King had urged in the strongest manner the condemnation of Fénelon's opinions, and even threatened reprisals if they were not condemned, that at last the Pope issued the required Brief (1699). It was thought by some that this would provoke a bitter resistance, but Fénelon was ill at ease in an atmosphere of strife: he bowed to the papal mandate, and for the future resided quietly in his diocese at Cambrai, unpopular with the Court but idolized by a large section of the people of France, who were beginning to weary of Louis XIV's repressive *régime*. We receive from this affair the same impression as from the King's dealings with the Protestants and the Jansenists, a feeling namely that the repressive religious action of the King was buying unity at a price ruinous to the nation. The next reign saw the Church in France, which had been so triumphant under Louis XIV, discredited and helpless in the face of sceptical and rationalistic attack; and its helplessness was largely the result of the religious policy of Louis XIV.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WAR WITH THE GRAND ALLIANCE.

THE truce of Ratisbon shows us Louis XIV's power at its highest point. Europe had not ventured to take up arms to wrest from him the gains that he had made through the Chambers of Reunion and the military movements which accompanied them. She saw those gains indeed with indignation, but felt her forces unequal to a struggle with so great an antagonist. But if the truce of Ratisbon marks the zenith of his power it marks also the beginning of his decline. During the next five years the European situation grew in very many important respects more unfavourable to his plans and in no single point improved.

The situation in Europe from 1685 to 1688.

In the first place, these years saw a series of defeats falling on an unrecognized but important ally of France. There was indeed no formal alliance between the Most Christian King of France and the Sultan of Turkey; but no one doubted, nor did the French deny, that there was an understanding between them arising out of the many interests that they had in common. Both saw in the Empire their great opponent, and to France the war that was constantly being waged between the Imperial forces and the Sultan's army was of immense value; for it not only employed a great section of the Imperial army that might otherwise have turned against France, but it also constantly distracted the diplomacy of Vienna and prevented the Emperor from devoting his whole energies to resistance to

French aggression. Down to 1685, the civilised armies of Europe had a well-grounded fear of the desperate courage and unceasing aggression of the Turks. But from that date onwards the prestige of the Turkish armies rapidly fell. The cause is partly to be found in internal corruption and mismanagement, but partly too in Turkish ignorance of the more modern methods of warfare. Villars, afterwards the celebrated Marshal of France, who served in the Imperial army as a volunteer, notices in his Memoirs the lack of all military science among the Turks, and especially their complete ignorance of siege apparatus and of scientific methods of attacking or defending a fort. In 1685 the Imperial forces gained great victories over them. In September 1686 Buda-Pesth was captured from them. Soon Hungary was torn from their grasp and added to the Imperial Crown. In August 1687 they were overwhelmed on the terrible field of Mohacz. Their collapse indeed was not so great as was at one time believed, but they never again were the menace to Vienna which they had once been.

In the next place the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes had brought evils in its train beyond the mere loss in men and money and energy that has already been dwelt on. For a time it made the Protestant alliances that had contributed so much to the strength of France impossible. No power had served France more usefully than the Protestant Elector of Brandenburg. He now gave the fugitive Huguenots a welcome in his territory and never again appeared on the side of France. Less striking but quite as important was the effect of the Revocation upon Holland. There the Stadtholder William of Orange, who constantly urged the danger from France and the need of military preparations, seemed losing ground to his opponents: but the cruel treatment of the Protestants in France enabled his advice to find more ready hearing and strengthened his hold upon the country. In England the Revocation had stirred feeling very deeply and increased the bitterness of

the national resistance to the plans of James II. In Germany too it added another motive of distrust against France and contributed to the formation of the League of Augsburg. This important league however rests rather on political than on religious grounds. The 'Reunions' and the truce of Ratisbon showed the necessity of a general league if the aggressions of France were to be resisted. A recent event had shown that that aggression was not yet at an end. On the death of the Elector Palatine Louis put forward a claim to the whole or part of his electorate for the Duchess of Orléans, wife of his brother Philip and sister of the late Elector. The Diet refused; and when Louis XIV appealed to the arbitration of Pope Innocent XI he found the Papal influence also hostile to him. The claim therefore fell to the ground, but it served to bring about a union against France which circumstances had been maturing for some time past. In July 1686, after much preliminary negotiation, the League of Augsburg came into existence. The Empire joined with Sweden and Spain and with the Circles of Bavaria, Franconia and the Upper Rhine, to maintain the territory and rights of the Empire by enforcing the observation of the treaties of Westphalia and Nimeguen, and the truce of Ratisbon. Shortly afterwards the League was joined by the Elector of Bavaria and the Duke of Savoy, and it was undoubtedly, though secretly, supported by Pope Innocent XI, whose quarrel with Louis XIV over the question of the *régale* was just at its height. An army of 60,000 men was to be maintained and kept in readiness for action. The League was supposed to be secret, but its formation and objects soon reached the ears of the King of France. Denmark was now his only ally in Europe; for Brandenburg had already made treaties with Sweden and the Empire.

It must be added, to complete the chief features of the situation, that there was everywhere a profound suspicion and distrust of Louis XIV. Designs were attributed to him that he probably never entertained or entertained only in a vague

form. But his designs against the Spanish succession were known. He was believed to aspire still to the Empire and to the Polish Crown. His career had proved that he would not be overscrupulous in the means he employed to reach his objects: the Chambers of Reunion, the attack on Strassburg, the inexcusable assault on Holland were not forgotten. And if he aimed at a power and a position which would have made him supreme arbiter of Europe, and was not likely to be scrupulous about the methods he employed, the forces at his disposal were alarmingly large. Even on a peace footing the army of France consisted of 140,000 foot and 30,000 horse. His naval forces were the greatest in Europe. He had 100 ships of war while England had only 60. The martial ardour of France was at its highest point. His soldiers were the best trained and the most efficient, his generals the most experienced and most skilful in Europe. The history of Europe from 1688 to 1713 cannot be understood unless it is realised that the power of Louis was a serious menace to the independence of Europe and was believed to be an even more serious menace than it really was.

The events of the year 1688.

The year 1688 saw the crisis approach. Events of the utmost importance for France were happening on the Lower Rhine and also in England. In the first place, Maximilian Henry of Bavaria, Electoral Archbishop of Cologne, was dying, and his death would open an European question of great magnitude. Maximilian Henry had combined the Bishoprics of Münster, Hildesheim and Liège with that of Cologne. Münster and Hildesheim were of little importance to France, but it would be a very serious matter if Cologne and Liège passed into the hands of an enemy. As soon therefore as the vacancy appeared probable, the diplomatic struggle between the Empire and France began. It was a great point in favour of France that Maximilian Henry before his death (which occurred in June 1688) appointed the French

(1) The disputed succession to the Electorate of Cologne.

candidate Cardinal Fürstenberg as coadjutor and thus gave him a strong claim upon the succession. But the election rested with the Chapter, and it was to the voting of this Chapter that the diplomatists of Europe turned their eyes. The Imperialist candidate was Joseph Clement of Bavaria, a young man 17 years of age, and not yet in orders, though already the nominal occupant of the Bishoprics of Freisingen and Regensburg. But all these disadvantages were counterbalanced by the support of the Pope. Louis XIV had appealed to him to favour his candidate, but the Pope was irritated with France on account of the high-handed action of the King in supporting the extravagant claims of the French ambassador at Rome. Innocent XI was therefore glad to be able to interfere with the plans of France. He granted a Bull of eligibility to Joseph Clement, and refused it to Cardinal Fürstenberg on the ground that he was already Bishop of Strassburg. Louvois in vain tried to frighten or cajole him. The rules of election made Cardinal Fürstenberg eligible if he received two-thirds of the votes, that is, sixteen out of the twenty-four. At one time the French agents believed that the required votes would be his, but when the day of election came only thirteen votes were cast for him. Neither candidate was therefore elected. The matter now rested with the Pope, and he declared for Joseph Clement. Cologne therefore was lost to France, and with Cologne the important military advantages that it implied, unless Louis XIV acted vigorously and at once. He decided to act vigorously. He first appealed against the decision of the Pope to a General Council, and was backed in his appeal by the Sorbonne and the Parlement of Paris. At the same time an army, under the nominal command of the Dauphin but under the real direction of Marshal Duras and Vauban, was despatched into Alsace (September 1688) and began the siege of Philipsburg, a strong fortress on the right bank of the Rhine, and the only important gate of entry into France that was still in the hands of Germany. Philipsburg held out, but

Heidelberg, Mannheim, Mainz and Bonn fell without much resistance into the hands of France.

(2) The Revolution in England.

Meanwhile still more important events were maturing in England. There is no need here to examine in detail the causes of the English Revolution. James II had come into clumsy collision with what was at that moment the strongest instinct of the English people—their fear and hatred of the Papal authority and the Roman Catholic system, quickened and embittered by recent events in France. His efforts to give toleration to the Catholics of England had driven a servilely loyal Parliament into hostility and had roused against him Whigs and Tories, Churchmen and Nonconformists. The unexpected birth of a son had opened up the probability of an indefinite series of Roman Catholic sovereigns and changed discontent into rebellion. A powerful appeal had been made to William of Orange to come over and help the cause of Protestantism and political liberty, a task for which he seemed specially adapted by his past history, his talents and his marriage with the daughter of James II. He was himself quite ready to accept the offer and the prospects of success seemed bright. The proposed enterprise was known to Louis XIV and he offered to assist James II in various ways, but all his offers were rejected; for James was himself of a stubborn and independent character and moreover feared to awaken the national prejudices of his people. Direct French help being thus out of the question the next critical point was to ascertain whether the States-General of Holland would allow their Stadtholder to start on an enterprise that was certain to draw with it momentous consequences. They sympathised of course with the Protestant movement in England; they shared largely in William's distrust and fear of Louis XIV; and they were further irritated against him by his exclusion of Dutch commodities, especially herrings, from France; but on the other hand the situation in Europe was dangerous, the renewal of war seemed probable, and they

hesitated to allow their Stadtholder and most trusted general to take troops out of the country at such a moment. Seignelai, the French minister of the Marine, proposed to equip the navy and to pour French troops upon Bergen-op-Zoom or Maestricht. Such a procedure might have made the States-General refuse permission to sail, though the point is very doubtful. But as we have seen, Louis XIV turned instead to his eastern frontier. The relief in Holland was very great. "The siege of Philipsburg," said the French ambassador to Holland, "caused the Dutch Stock to rise 10 per cent. and the States-General, confident that the King would not attack them, became very insolent in their tone." William was allowed to sail and landed at Brixham in Torbay, 5 November, 1688. It is not necessary to dwell on what followed. James showed neither courage nor tact nor energy. His best officers, Churchill among them, deserted him. He despaired before there was any real necessity for despair, sent the Queen and the Prince of Wales out of the country and himself followed. He reached Ambleteuse, in Picardy, on January 4 and was warmly received by Louis XIV on January 7.

William was thus left victorious without having had to strike a blow, and soon he found himself in the midst of a constitutional debate which aimed at settling on what terms and by what right he was to occupy the throne of England. But these constitutional debates do not concern us. It seems indeed an entire misreading of William's career to think of him as the founder of the constitutional liberties of England. Neither the domestic affairs of England nor those of Holland were his first concern. He was before all things a great European statesman, and he valued the Crown of England as he valued the Stadtholdership of Holland mainly as weapons wherewith he could abase the predominance of Louis XIV and restore equilibrium and security to Europe. Henceforth his considerable military powers, his immense diplomatic skill and knowledge, his extraordinary courage and determination were devoted to wearing down the power of France. It was at first a little

doubtful whether the Empire, Catholic and absolutist, would join with England and Holland which professed opposite opinions. But the demands of the situation and the diplomacy of William overcame all obstacles. An alliance was made between the Empire, England and Holland. France had declared war against Holland in November 1688. Spain and Brandenburg came in later, and thus the Grand Alliance of 1690 was formed. France stood alone against Europe. Even Sweden and Denmark gave the Allies indirect assistance. In June 1690 Victor Amadeus of Savoy was brought over to the Allies by the promise of Pinerolo and other territorial gains.

The Grand Alliance.

The war that thus commenced was singularly destitute of those events that fire the enthusiasm or stamp themselves upon the memory of posterity. Yet if we look at the number of nations involved, the size of the armies and the cost of the struggle, it deserves to be called one of the greatest wars that Europe has known. The lack of any obvious plan running through the details of the war makes it the more necessary to grasp its main character and the chief conditions on which success or failure depended. It is well then to notice in the first place that on the continent of Europe the war was for France almost entirely a defensive war. The conquests of the early part of the reign and the energy of Vauban's genius had immensely strengthened the frontiers of France. On the North, earthworks were made to supplement canals and rivers in forming a continuous defensive frontier, and strong fortresses arose at intervals, constructed by Vauban on new principles and garrisoned by strong detachments of troops. The Allies on their side relied on a similarly constructed but weaker line of defence. Thus on the northern frontier not only do we find a large number of sieges, but the whole course of the war is in the nature of a siege of the French lines. When the Grand Alliance had been formed, Louis recognised the impossibility of defeating his

The Military Situation.

enemies on the Continent in any decisive fashion and ordered his Marshals to stand mainly on the defensive. There are consequently portions of the war—the year 1694 for instance—when upon the Continent almost nothing was done. Louis would not strike and was too strong to be attacked, for the French military supremacy was still unquestionable. A better system of tactics, of drill, of fortifications, together with some superiority of weapons, gave them in all open collisions with the enemy an uninterrupted series of victories. But it may be remarked that by the end of the war the superiority of the French, though still great, was less than it had been. Luxemburg, who died in January 1695, warned the King of the vast improvement that the Allies were showing. By the end of the war it was plain that Cohorn had gained a mastery over the science of fortification almost as great as that of Vauban.

Louis then does not seem to have hoped to gain any decisive success against the Coalition, so long as it remained unbroken. But would it hold together? The Anglo-Dutch alliance was its keystone, and at one time it seemed possible that he might recover his hold on England. The strength of the French navy has already been noticed. If the English and Dutch navies were crushed the game would be in Louis' hands. The Irish, with the exception of the Protestant immigrants, had sided with James II, not out of any love for the Stuart cause but out of hatred for England; and a counter-revolution was not impossible in England, for, though Protestantism had triumphed over loyalty for the time, loyalty was still strong and William was not personally popular. If he were expelled his power and prestige would be much less than it had been before 1688. The French Government was always hoping for such a counter-revolution.

But, above all, in this war it was the longer purse that won. The system of huge armaments, long sieges, indecisive campaigns required vast resources, and even at the beginning of the war the resources

The financial condition of France.

of France were neither abundant nor well ordered. For Colbert had found no real successor, and his work was gradually undone. Since the death of Colbert the yearly expenses had increased by seven million livres. In 1688 there was a deficit of from six to seven million livres. Le Pelletier was Controller of Finance down to 1689, but then resigned rather than face the immense burden of the war. His place was taken by Pontchartrain, a man reputed brilliant and courageous, but as a financier devoted entirely to the discovery of temporary expedients, with no knowledge of or care for the principles of taxation and national well-being. The expedients of 1689 were of the old kind and difficult to reduce to a system. Offices were sold on all sides. The legal posts in the new provinces were made hereditary and saleable. Municipal offices became purchaseable, especially the office of Mayor. The headships of trades guilds were for a price made hereditary. The coinage was debased: the indirect collection of taxes was resumed because of the ready money it brought in. Coffee, tea and chocolate were made State monopolies. No lease was allowed to extend over nine years, in order that the State might reap fees from its renewal. In brief, Pontchartrain grasped at ready money on every side, with no thought for posterity, with hardly a thought for five years ahead. The financial system of Colbert was utterly wrecked. France re-entered on a course which was to bring Revolution eventually and even in the present war contributed largely to bring defeat.

The ravaging of the Palatinate, 1689.

The course of events in England and the threat of a huge European coalition against France made a change in the French plan of campaign inevitable. The siege of Philipsburg was indeed persisted in. The nature of the ground and a very wet season prolonged it beyond the day that Vauban had marked for its fall; but it fell at last and was garrisoned by French troops. It was judged however impossible to defend the German towns of the Palatinate which had been occupied by France. What was to be

done with them? If they fell, as they were, into the hands of the enemy, they would furnish him with excellent quarters and a most valuable basis of supplies. The King, acting, it is certain, upon the prompting of Louvois, determined on an atrocious measure that recalled the worst scenes of the Thirty Years' War. The towns were to be destroyed; no house nor public or sacred building was to be left standing. In this way Speier, Mannheim, Oppenheim, Bingen, Worms were destroyed; but nothing roused the indignation of Europe so much as the fate of Heidelberg. Its famous castle was blown up with gunpowder, and, if the orders had been strictly carried out, no house would have been left standing. Nor did the devastation end with the towns. The peasantry were warned off from the rich and highly cultivated country, and one of the most fertile portions of Europe was turned, so far as could be, into a desert. The peasants were forbidden under heavy penalties to sow any crops within five leagues of either bank of the Moselle. This barbarity was defended on the ground that it was necessary in order to hinder the German forces from laying siege to Mainz, then garrisoned by the French. The greatest indignation was of course expressed by the Allies. But even in France few were found to approve such ruthless savagery, while many condemned it. The chief blame attached to Louvois, whose orders were most definite and peremptory. "All the buildings at Mannheim are to be destroyed," he said, "not one is to be left standing"; and similar orders were received elsewhere. His agents did not like the work, and would have protested more loudly if they had dared. Count Tessé had been one of the chief executants of the dragonnades, but he sickened at the work done in Heidelberg. Marshal Duras represented to the King the infinite misery caused, the enduring shame that would be fixed on the King's reputation; but still the orders had to be carried out. The advantage that accrued to France was much smaller than was expected. The complete destruction of whole towns proved impossible; nature

renewed her work; Mainz fell in spite of all into the hands of the Allies. The most permanent result was to be found in the deterioration of discipline among the French troops. After they had had a surfeit of loot and license, it proved impossible to bring them back to their former orderly life. Towards the end of the year one piece of intelligence came to cheer the French. Innocent XI died in October 1689; he was succeeded by Alexander VIII, who was judged much more favourable to the French claims.

Preparations for 1690.

The year 1690 promised military events on a much greater scale. The Grand Alliance was made definite and firm during the early months of the year, and France prepared to make great efforts. Armies were posted at four points of her frontier. Marshal Luxemburg, the greatest of living French soldiers and in some degree an inheritor of the *verve* and the methods of the great Condé, was despatched to the North. His abilities were recognised by all; but the vices of his private life and a charge of complicity in the famous Brinvilliers poisoning case, though subsequently disproved, had kept him of late in obscurity until the national danger brought him again into prominence. On the Rhine the Dauphin was still in nominal command, with Marshal Lorges to help him. Lorges was a nephew of Turenne, and had gained distinction in subaltern positions, but showed himself unequal to high command. Catinat watched Savoy and Italy, and in the South Noailles prepared to strike at Spain in Catalonia. But the crucial struggle was to be elsewhere. For James II had gone to put himself at the head of the Roman Catholic Irish and was assisted by French troops and French officers, while the French navy, in full force and excellently equipped, put to sea to cooperate with the campaign against the British Isles or to crush, if possible, the Dutch and English fleets. It will be well to look first at the attack directed against Great Britain through Ireland and on the seas.

In Ireland the year opened very brightly for France. The Celtic population was unanimous for James. The Protestants of the North were driven to take refuge in Londonderry and in Enniskillen, where they offered a prolonged and heroic resistance to vastly superior forces. But that resistance, even when victory had crowned the Protestant arms at both places, seemed only a slight check to the Stuart and French cause in the island. Even when Marshal Schomberg came over to take charge of the war on behalf of England, the balance still inclined on the side of the native Catholics. The situation was so difficult that William III had unwillingly to leave England and turn his back for the moment on the European struggle. His army was a strangely composite one; it showed clearly that the Irish struggle was but one part of the vast European war, for English, Germans, Dutch, Danes and refugee French served under him. The chances of James II were far from hopeless, but his stubborn folly and his cowardice ruined all. The troops met on the banks of the Boyne on July 1, 1690. The regiments that consisted of Protestants exiled from France bore a very prominent part in the attack, though their leader Schomberg was killed in the crossing of the river. James had, before he came to the throne, been accounted a brave man, but now, while the Irish were still resisting bravely and the future of the day was quite undecided, he turned and fled to Kinsale and from thence to France. His flight ruined all hopes of ultimate success; but the Irish still kept up a struggle that showed what they might have done with proper guidance and support. Under the leadership of Sarsfield they defended Limerick so well that William had to raise the siege; and, though Marlborough captured Cork and Kinsale in the late autumn, the war dragged on into the next year. It was not until July 1691 that the final blow was given. Then Athlone was taken under the eyes of the French General St Ruth, and on 22 July the same general was defeated and killed at Aghrim. The Irish were now so

Course of the War in Ireland.

utterly crushed that Limerick could not offer a prolonged resistance. The place capitulated in October 1691, and a large number of its defenders were allowed by the terms of the capitulation to pass over to France, where they made a very useful addition to the French armies.

The French Navy.

But while things were going from bad to worse in Ireland, the French navy had achieved a great success. It was commanded by Tourville and consisted of some 78 ships. An Anglo-Dutch fleet of about 60 vessels was encountered on 10 July, 1690, off Beachy Head. There was either bad tactics or bad faith on the English side, for Admiral Herbert allowed the whole stress of the attack to fall on the Dutch ships and did not bring the English vessels up to relieve them. Fourteen ships of the line, of which thirteen were Dutch, were lost to the Allies. The command of the sea passed for the moment entirely into the hands of the French. Yet the actual results were very small. An attack upon London was feared; but the only further harm done to England was the burning of the unimportant town of Teignmouth in Devonshire and of four warships that had taken refuge in its harbour. The failure of the French to follow up the advantage that they had thus gained is one of the strangest features of the war. It is partly to be explained by the death of the Marquis of Seignelai in November 1690. He had virtually carried on the traditions of Colbert's régime, and he found no successor of competence or energy approaching his own. For the present the navy fell under the supervision of Pontchartrain, who already controlled the finances.

The Continental War in 1790.

On land the year had shown the superiority of the French arms. The allied army on the northern frontier under the Prince of Waldeck tried to penetrate into France by the valley of the Meuse. Luxemburg met him near Fleurus with an equal force. By a clever and daring movement he turned the flank of the enemy and overwhelmed it by the suddenness of his attack. The

Allies lost one-third of their men and more than one hundred flags. The Netherlands seemed lost to them, but they were saved by the lethargy of Luxemburg, whose skill lay rather in fighting battles than in directing campaigns. No further movement was attempted by the Allies, and the French confined themselves to defence. On the Rhine and on the Spanish frontier nothing was done, but in the South-East Catinat utterly defeated the troops of Savoy in the battle of Staffarda with a loss of over 4000 men, and expelled the Duke from almost the whole of his territories. France was also encouraged by the news of another battle, fought at a long distance from France but none the less useful to her. In October 1690 the Turks recovered Belgrade, and again the Empire feared a Turkish invasion. Despite the Battle of the Boyne and other events in Ireland, the result of the year's fighting seemed to favour French hopes.

The Continental War during 1691.

The year 1691 presents us with no incidents of nearly such importance. The course of events in Ireland has already been narrated. In the South, Nice fell into the hands of France, but the only movements of real importance were on the northern frontier. The King, supported by Luxemburg and Vauban, undertook the siege of Mons. The place was a strong one but, despite the efforts of William to relieve it, it capitulated at the beginning of April. The rest of the campaign was uneventful, except for a brilliant cavalry engagement at Leuze, where Luxemburg supported by Villars defeated a much larger number and took forty standards. But more important than all these contests was the death of Louvois in July. Before his death there had been some coldness and considerable difference of opinion between himself and the King. Madame de Maintenon's influence was against him. With the Marshals he was never popular, for he was too apt to override their plans and treat them as subordinates; and it may be doubted whether his advice as to the management of a campaign was always for

the best. Certainly his influence upon the King had often been very evil. His truculent diplomacy had done much to make France hated in Europe. His hand is to be traced in the Revocation of the Edict and the Devastation of the Palatinate, and these two events have left a deep stain on the memory of the reign. It was he too who by rash measures had forced the Duke of Savoy to join the ranks of the Coalition. But he had an immense talent for the details of military organization. No troops had ever been so well found as those of France during this epoch, and after his death France soon learnt to know his value in this respect. His place was taken but not filled by his son the Marquis of Barbezieux, then twenty-four years of age.

The War during 1692.

The year 1692 saw the same plan of campaign pursued on the Continent with much the same results. The French won victories that brought a successful end to the war no nearer. Louis laid siege to the great fortress of Namur, which commands the junction of the Sambre and the Meuse; William III found it impossible to relieve it, and it capitulated on the 30th of June. But though William could not prevent its fall he tried to revenge it, and attacked Luxemburg's army at Steinkirk. The conflict was conducted on both sides with the greatest obstinacy and was chiefly supported by the infantry. In the end William was driven back with a loss of some eight thousand men. The loss on the French side was little smaller. In the South-East the Duke of Savoy pushed an army on to French soil and besieged and took Embrun; but the loss, though annoying, entailed no further consequences. The greatest event of the year was a naval one and had occurred in May. William's position in England was known to be a very trying one. Many prominent statesmen and soldiers and sailors were in treasonous correspondence with James, and amongst these was Admiral Russell. It was believed that if he met the French fleet he would refuse to fight, and, with this hope, the French Admiral Tourville was

ordered by Pontchartrain to engage the enemy however inferior in numbers he might be. Preparations had meanwhile been made for an attack on England. A force was prepared on the coasts of Normandy, and James and the Marshal Bellefonds went down to be in readiness. Tourville was ordered to escort the force across the Channel. He protested against being exposed to the much superior force of the English and Dutch, but his protest was not recognized. He met Admiral Russell's fleet in mid-channel on the 29th of May. The French had 44 ships, the Allies 99. There was no sign of the anticipated treason and with such disparity of numbers the issue was certain. On the first day's fighting there was little advantage on either side, but Tourville thought it necessary to give the order to withdraw. During the retreat under cover of night the fleet was separated. Most of the vessels made their escape successfully, but twelve were driven into the open roadstead of La Hogue and were there attacked and captured by the English fleet, and three other French vessels also fell into the hands of the English. James thus saw his last hope disappear. Yet the defeat of the French was not the overwhelming affair that it has sometimes been represented; they had lost only one more ship than the Allies at the battle of Beachy Head. But the battle is a notable one because it was the last effort of the French navy to cope with the English during the reign of Louis XIV. Henceforth the naval strength of France rapidly decayed; but the decay is to be explained not by the battle of La Hogue but by maladministration, by financial difficulties and the constant strain of the land war.

Great efforts were made on both sides to give a more decisive character to the campaign of 1693. In France more regiments were raised and ships were built. The military order of St Louis was established to distinguish merit in the land or sea services. Since the financial distress had reduced the government of France to the expedient of selling military appointments and

The war in 1693.

thus destroying all chance of promotion by merit it was hoped that the new order would offer some compensation.

Yet the year passed without decisive events of any kind. The King, with his court, joined the army in the Spanish Netherlands and intended to lay siege to Liège; but William managed to throw troops into the place. Liège was thus saved; but Louis found himself face to face with William's army in circumstances which gave to the French a very great advantage. William had only 50,000 men, while Louis' army consisted of 110,000. Luxemburg implored him to attack and seize a certain victory; but Louis, though he prided himself on his conduct of sieges, had no love for battles in the open. He refused the engagement and, by refusing it, lost irrevocably his military reputation. It was his last appearance on the theatre of war. On the King's retirement, Luxemburg with much inferior forces determined to attack his great antagonist. He found William (July 28) strongly posted at Neerwinden, and the effort to drive him from it brought on the most terrible struggle of the war. Neerwinden was three times taken and three times recaptured by the Allies. The French guards at last carried the place by a heavy bayonet charge—it is the first time that this weapon was used on a great scale in European warfare. William had lost more than 12,000 men, and Brussels seemed exposed to the French. But William managed with dogged determination to reorganize his forces; and the fortress of Charleroi was the only gain that the French made as a result of their great victory. On the Rhine frontier Heidelberg was retaken by the French and again pillaged and burnt, and again we hear of the demoralization produced among the troops by their life of constant pillage. In Italy Catinat defeated the Duke of Savoy in the important battle of Marsaglia. No effort was made during the year to dispute with England the mastery of the seas; but English commerce suffered heavily. England had a much greater volume of commerce than France, and the famous French

corsairs Jean Bart and Duguay Trouin constantly harassed and destroyed it. In June Tourville and Jean Bart evaded the English ships of the line and fell on the great commercial fleet of Smyrna. The small English escort under Admiral Rooke was driven off, and more than 100 ships were taken. The alarm and indignation that this event caused in England seemed likely to produce very important consequences.

But really more important than Neerwinden or Marsaglia or the disaster to the Smyrna fleet was the financial distress of France. She was perishing, as Voltaire said, to the sound of Te Deums.

Distress in France.

The harvests of 1692 and 1693 had been very bad. The taxes were very heavy and the method of collection more than doubled their weight. A desire for peace grew strong among the leaders of French opinion, and found its clearest voice in an anonymous letter of this year which is doubtfully attributed to Fénelon. The unknown author arraigns the whole policy and character of the King. "You must ask for peace," he said, "and expiate by this shame the glory that you have worshipped. You must give back to your enemies the conquests that you cannot retain without injustice." Louis made some overtures for peace, but they were not received.

During the year 1694 the war languished. In the Netherlands the armies held one another in a stalemate. Marshal Lorges was as ineffective as usual on the Rhine. In Catalonia Noailles gained success and would probably have reduced Barcelona, if the place had not been relieved by the English fleet under Admiral Russell. An English attack on Brest was beaten off without difficulty, but Dieppe was bombarded and destroyed by an English naval force. The French privateers kept up their irritating and destructive attacks on English and Dutch commerce. The most important consequence of the year's fighting was the increasing financial strain, which was borne with more difficulty by France than by the Allies.

The War in 1694.

The winter of 1694–1695 was chiefly employed by France in efforts to procure money for the coming year. The coinage was again debased, new offices were created and sold: in the course of thirty years it is estimated that Louis created 40,000 offices in order to sell them. At last Pontchartrain accepted the proposal of Basville, *intendant* of Languedoc, and established the *capitation*, a tax on property that struck the privileged as well as the unprivileged. It was the only road that would lead France out of her financial troubles, but it was applied so timidly that the actual income from the tax was only 21 million francs[1]. In England, meanwhile, the Bank of England had been established, and the coinage had been put on a sound footing by Locke and Newton. It is in this contrast that we see the real cause of the end of the war.

Louis stood wholly on the defensive in his military operations. There is only one really important military event during the year. William laid siege to Namur, whose fortifications were reckoned the masterpiece of Vauban and whose capture in 1692 had so gratified the ambition of Louis XIV. Vauban's rival Cohorn conducted the attack, and after much desperate fighting it fell in September 1695. The immediate consequences were not very great; but it was the first important defeat of France in Europe, and its

1695.

[1] It was withdrawn when peace was made, but was reimposed upon the outbreak of the next war, and remained henceforth one of the permanent and most important taxes of the Monarchy. It is noteworthy, as showing how the strength of the Monarchy had increased, that no important protest was made against this tax by either nobility or clergy. Nothing however can illustrate better than the history of this tax the tendency of the French Monarchy during its last century to be unjust to the poorer classes. The tax was at first equitable and graduated so as to fall most heavily upon the richest classes. But before a hundred years were passed all that had been changed. On one excuse and another the nobility and clergy had withdrawn themselves from their fair share of the burden. In 1789 it was stated on good authority that the nobles paid only *one-eighth* of what was due from them, while the peasant paid eight times his proper assessment.

effect on public opinion and feeling was considerable. During the year the English fleet bombarded French ports—Saint Malo, Granville, Dunkirk—without much result. The French corsairs continued to be as troublesome as ever.

During the year 1696 the war was almost at a standstill. Luxemburg had died in the previous year, and there was some difficulty in finding a competent successor. Diplomacy was however very active. On both sides there was a weariness of the war, and even William was preparing to accept terms. In 1693 Louis had made terms with the Pope. The declaration of Gallican liberties was not withdrawn, but it was no longer to be openly insisted on; and thus an influence very hostile to France was neutralised. In 1695 negotiations had been opened with Savoy. They were completed in 1696. By a treaty that was ratified on the 29th June, Pinerolo and Casale and other towns were to be surrendered to Savoy. The Duke was to be treated as an independent sovereign, and his daughter Marie-Adelaide was to marry the Duke of Burgundy, the eldest son of the Dauphin. On these terms the Duke consented to join his forces to those of France. William spoke to the Parliament in October 1696 of pending negotiations, and the Commons, in order to strengthen his hands, voted a subsidy of six millions. 1696.

With the year 1697 negotiations were begun in good earnest. Colbert de Croissi, the minister of Foreign Affairs, had died in 1696. He was succeeded by his son the Marquis de Torci. The mediation of Sweden was accepted by France and the Allies. A conference was opened on May 9, but the apparatus of ceremony and etiquette made the progress of affairs intolerably slow. A series of private interviews between Marshal Boufflers and Lord Bentinck at Hall advanced business much more quickly, and elicited from Louis a promise to give no assistance to the enemies of William III, so that James II was all but nominally abandoned by France. Meanwhile the French arms were not 1697. Treaty of Ryswick.

altogether idle. Barcelona was attacked by Vendôme, a grandson of Henry IV, and, as no naval assistance came this time from the Allies, the place fell into the hands of the French (5 August). This increased the readiness of the Allies to accept peace. England, Holland and France signed a treaty on Sept. 20. The Imperial representatives held out a little longer, but feeling their inability to stand alone they also signed at last (October 30), and then Europe was again at peace.

The conditions of the Peace were simple. France was exhausted by the war, and after her long series of victories made important concessions to all her enemies. The Dutch gave back to France Pondicherry in India, which they had captured during the war, and received in exchange a favourable treaty of commerce for twenty-five years. England received the recognition of William III, and a promise from Louis XIV not to assist his enemies. The outlook of the Stuarts was hopeless if the promise were kept. Barcelona and Luxemburg were given back to Spain. The frontier on the North was to be what it had been after the Peace of Nimeguen. The cession of Pinerolo and Casale to Savoy has already been noted. The settlement with the Empire was a more difficult matter. At first the Emperor demanded the restitution of Strassburg and the Alsatian towns, and Louis XIV had seemed willing to yield on the point. But later, when terms had been made, though not yet signed, with England, Holland and Spain, he withdrew his offer of restoring Strassburg and took up an attitude towards the representatives of the Empire something like that adopted at the Truce of Ratisbon. The Empire yielded. Strassburg and Alsace remained in the hands of France: it was the only permanent gain from the Courts of Reunion.

The vast war had produced comparatively insignificant changes in the map of Europe. But the real change was very great. If France in 1697 compared her position with what it had been in 1688, she found her prestige somewhat diminished,

her frontiers withdrawn, her resources exhausted; above all she saw her most persistent opponent seated on the throne of England, and England herself strengthened and enriched, no longer insular in policy and aims, but prepared to play a great European part in antagonism to France. But France was still unquestionably the first Power of Europe. It had required a great European alliance to make her yield even so far as she had yielded in the Peace of Ryswick. A period of peace and careful administration would have soon restored her to her old strong and commanding position in Europe. Unfortunately she was destined to enjoy little peace and no sound administration for the next century.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUESTION OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.

SOCIAL and economic causes have such a constant and important influence on the disasters of Louis XIV's later years and the decline of the French Monarchy after Louis XIV, that it seems well to speak more fully on certain points connected with them than was possible in the last chapter.

The constitution of the Towns under Louis XIV.

We have seen in Chapter I how the early free constitutions of the towns of France were already being encroached upon in the days of Francis I. The monarchy as it rose to absolutism extended its sway almost as completely over the great towns as over the provinces; and the same instrument was employed in both cases, the *intendants*, whom Richelieu had established with a very different purpose. Confining our attention to what was done in this matter during the reign of Louis XIV, we may notice first that Colbert had, doubtless with the best intentions, seriously diminished the liberties of the municipalities. He found many abuses prevailing, some the inevitable occasional results of a free constitution, others due to the limitations that had already been placed on their liberties. Many of the great cities were deep in debt; in many the mayors and other municipal authorities had contrived to make themselves a sort of privileged order and escape the ordinary taxation, which thus fell with unjust weight upon the rest of the citizens; further, Colbert was informed by the

Colbert.

intendants that in many instances there was gross financial corruption, that far more money was exacted from the citizens than was spent in the service of the town or the State, and that a great portion of the difference was wasted in civic banquets and festivities. Colbert in fact found that many of the evils from which the State suffered were reproduced upon a smaller scale in the municipalities, and he resolved to apply much the same remedies in the one case as the other. He scrutinised all claims to privilege and annulled most of them; he enforced a more careful and accurate keeping of accounts; he applied a considerable part of the town revenue to the liquidation of municipal debt; most important of all, he ordered the municipal authorities, each year, to submit their balance-sheet to the nearest *intendant*, who in turn submitted it to the King's Council. Little exception can be taken to these measures, and, as a result of them, the prosperity of the towns materially improved during his administration. A more dangerous tendency was shown when he objected, as he did in many instances, to the popularly chosen municipal officials, and substituted direct nominees of the Crown.

The Act of 1692.

After Colbert's death and during the progress of the war with "the Grand Alliance" Louis XIV again interfered with the municipalities, but without Colbert's excuse of good intentions. The financial pressure of the war was very great, and all expedients seemed exhausted, when the sale of municipal offices suggested itself as a certain source of a large immediate income. To sell municipal offices it was necessary first to abolish the method of popular election, and in August 1692 an edict was issued which, by a stroke of the pen, abolished all municipal liberties, and inflicted upon France a more serious and irremediable wound than the loss of many battles. The first clause of the edict runs:—"We have determined to appoint titular mayors in all the towns of our realm, who, not owing their posts to the votes of individuals and having no longer anything to fear from their

successors, will be able to exercise their functions without passion, and with the complete liberty which is necessary for the maintenance of equality in the distribution of the public burdens. Moreover, as they will hold their office for life, they will be able to acquire a perfect knowledge of the business of the community, and, by prolonged experience, they will become capable of fulfilling all the duties and obligations which attach to their office." The pretext of the public good was not likely to deceive anyone: this edict was supplemented by others, and the office of mayor was declared to be "venal, perpetual and hereditary." Nor could the Government, having once entered upon the downward path, stop here. An Act of 1706 created the office of "deputy mayors" in order to put it up for sale; and the evil work was completed by a statute of 1714, by which the same conditions of "venality, perpetuity and heredity" were extended to sheriffs, councillors (*jurats*) and all other municipal officials, the numbers of which were absurdly increased, while, to complete the evil, the tenure of some of these offices for a period of years allowed the occupant to enter the ranks of the privileged. Monarchical France never shook herself free from this miserable and ruinous system. In the reign of Louis XV it sank even lower than in that of Louis XIV. Seven times during the course of the later reign were the towns allowed to repurchase the right of representative government; and seven times it was taken from them to be sold again to individuals.

Contemporary criticism of the economic system of France.

We have already shown the chief features of the economic system of France, improved for a time, but only for a short time, by Colbert. The unequal and unjust incidence of taxation, always unjust but also always uncertain; the power of oppression given by the use of *partisans* [see vol. I. p. 278]; the universal confusion—all these evil features grew more marked during the last years of Louis XIV's reign. But the system did not pass uncriticised either in its effects or its principles, and it will be well, postponing further details of its

working until we come to the last days of the Ancient Regime, to note two of the most energetic criticisms directed against it. In doing so, chronological order will be neglected, for while one is taken from the period of the war with the Grand Alliance the second belongs to the darkest hours of the war of the Spanish Succession.

1. Boisguillebert.

Pierre le Pesant, sieur de Boisguillebert, was a magistrate of Rouen. He published his first important work, the *Détail de la France*, in 1697, and his second, the *Factum de la France* (which is little more than a re-statement of the principles of the first one), in 1707. He died in 1714. The sub-title of the *Détail de la France* is, "The cause of the diminution in the country's wealth and the ease of finding a remedy, whereby in one month the King's wants might be supplied, and everybody at the same time made richer." He held that the precious metals were not the real cause of a nation's wealth, but only a sign of it. He called agriculture and commerce "the two breasts of the Commonwealth," and urged that the State ought to impose its taxation in such a way as to do as little harm as possible to these two great sources of national well-being. This led him to examine the existing method of taxation and especially the method of imposing and collecting the *taille*. He showed arbitrary power and corruption accompanying every step; the springs of interest and thrift destroyed; the peasant living in even greater squalor than his poverty made necessary, in order to escape from an increase in the *taille*, which would certainly follow any sign of well-being; lastly perpetual litigation, ruinous to the tax-payer and benefiting only the lawyers. He further examined the cruel effects of such financial privileges and provincial customs as had escaped the reforming zeal of Colbert. He summed up his conclusions under twenty-five heads. The following gives the gist both of his criticism and his proposed remedy.

"After careful enquiry I find that the wealth of France decreases by 500 millions (of livres) per annum....This disorder

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is without example since the creation of the world. A wealthy kingdom has lost half its wealth in thirty or forty years without plague, earthquake, civil war, foreign invasion, or any of those accidents which usually ruin monarchies....The land is going out of cultivation for two reasons. (1) The arbitrary *taille* passes over the rich and crushes the poor man, who has only his body to support himself and his family. If he could bear more a greater burden would be put upon him; he has no inducement therefore to cultivate the land, and allows it to lie untilled. (2) The customs and excise prevent him disposing of the product of his land, so that one province is reduced to drinking water, while in the adjoining province vineyards are being destroyed because there is no sale for the wine....The remedy is simple and conservative. The system of taxation must be arranged with regard to the interests of the King and his people. The rate of taxation must be fixed and equitable. The poor must pay in proportion to their poverty; the wealthy in proportion to his riches, without constant recourse being necessary to trials at law[1]." Boisguillebert in fact proposes the abolition of privilege and the establishment of equal rights, which was the dream of every reformer but which remained unrealised until the Revolution.

2. Vauban.

The second critic of the financial system of France was Marshal Vauban. He and Turenne present the very highest type of the military character. Wherever we meet Vauban he is a great man. He was the greatest military engineer of his time, and since Turenne's death no one had contributed so much to the strength of France, whether for attack or defence, as he had. In war his courage and his skill were not more remarkable than his humanity. But he was never more truly heroic and patriotic than when, during the course of the war of the Spanish Succession, he ventured to point out the desperate condition of France, to analyse its

[1] The above is a loose translation from pp. 253—255 of Daire's *Economistes-Financiers du* XVIII^e *siècle.*

causes, and to suggest remedies. His important work, the *Dîme Royale*, was published in 1707 and presented to the King.

The Preface contains an often-quoted passage: "By all the researches that I have been able to make during several years of close application, I have come to the clear conclusion that one-tenth of the people is reduced to beggary, and does as a matter of fact live by begging; of the nine-tenths remaining, five cannot give alms to the first tenth, because they are very little better off: of the other four-tenths, three are in far from comfortable circumstances, and are embarrassed by debt and law-suits; in the tenth that still remains, which includes the clergy, the nobility, the legal profession, the Government officials and the higher merchant class, there cannot be more than a hundred thousand families. Of these there are not more than ten thousand that are thoroughly well off, and nearly the whole of these are employed in the public service, or closely connected with that service." The *Dîme Royale* is more argumentative than Boisguillebert's book, fuller of numerical detail and precise argument, and therefore less attractive to the ordinary reader; but its main ideas are much the same as those of the *Détail de la France*. Vauban urges the following theses among others: that the King owes an equal protection to all, and that class privileges are ruinous to the State; that labour is the origin of all wealth, and that agriculture is the most important form of labour; that all revenues should be justly and proportionately taxed; that indirect taxation is a dangerous expedient; that the common people, though crushed and despised, is the real foundation of the State. There are doubtless economical errors to be found in the book, and yet it has justly been called "the most important work on public economy that appeared before the *Wealth of Nations*."

The actual proposals of Vauban are not the really important part of his book for the student of history, but they deserve mention. For the existing system of taxation (or rather absence of any system) Vauban proposed to substitute, (1) a

'royal tithe' of five per cent. on the yearly produce of all land; (2) a tax of five per cent. on all incomes not derived from land; (3) a salt tax, so altered that it should hardly have anything in common with the unpopular *gabelle*; (4) a remodelled system of custom and excise.

There runs through this treatise, and also through that of Boisguillebert, a warm sympathy for suffering and a fine recognition of the solidarity of the interests of all classes, and even, though this refers especially to Boisguillebert, of all nations. Vauban's opinions on another subject also must not be passed over. He saw, as many saw, how evil had been the results of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; but, with a greater courage than any of his contemporaries, he urged that the evil work should be undone. He submitted a paper to Louvois (whether it was shown to Louis or not is uncertain) in which he urged that the hypocritical conformity of the Protestants was a scandal to religion; that the persecution to which they were subject was contrary "to all the virtues, Christian, moral, and civil"; that the trade and industry of France were suffering by their banishment, and could only be remedied by their recall.

Louis XIV towards the end of his reign would listen to no advice on politics or religion. Both books were condemned and withdrawn from circulation; and Vauban was under the shadow of disgrace when he died in 1707. Little was done after the Peace of Ryswick to put the finances of the State into good order. Though Chamillart succeeded Pont-Chartrain as finance minister and was perhaps more fertile in his expedients than his predecessor, no effort was made to introduce a change of system. France had not really recovered from the strain of the last war when she was confronted with another still more dangerous and on an even greater scale.

The military prestige and strength of France had been built on the ruins of the Spanish power. The late wars had shown how far Spain had sunk from what she had been in

the days of Charles V and Philip II. An important territory had been torn from her and formed into the Republic of the United Netherlands in the sixteenth century; and every treaty into which she had entered during the seventeenth had seen the surrender of some further fragment of her unwieldy empire. But her dominions were still by far the largest possessed by any European State. Outside her own peninsula she possessed the Spanish Netherlands, lying between Holland and France; Milan and Naples with Sicily, and thereby the supremacy in the Italian peninsula; dominions in the West Indies and the new world, which had really been a drain on her strength and a cause of weakness, but were nevertheless a source of much pride to herself and of jealousy to the maritime powers of Europe. And now the future of these vast territories was doubtful, and their ownership was likely to become a matter of fierce dispute. For the present occupant of the Spanish throne, Charles II, was childless and had no hope of issue. His constitution was so weak that for the last fifteen years his death had been talked of, and from the time of the Peace of Ryswick it was believed to be very rapidly approaching. While he still occupied the throne he was far indeed from being the ruler of Spain. There had for several generations been a suspicion of mental weakness in the Royal House of Spain, and in the last descendant of that House it almost amounted to idiocy. He was quite incapable of understanding or guiding the affairs of his world-wide empire. He was the tool of his wife or of the priests, and his court was a constant scene of intrigue for the acquisition of influence over him. There are few more melancholy or grotesque pictures in history than that afforded by this miserable King, around whose death-bed the diplomatists of Spain and of Europe struggled, and whose will, though he had not energy nor intelligence enough to make it himself, was yet the pivot of one of the vastest questions which have ever agitated Europe.

Spain and the Question of the Spanish Succession.

To whom would his dominions pass at his death? It was certain at least that Spain would not be able to determine the point for herself. She displayed every mark of a weak and decaying power. The confusion of her finances was as bad as that of France, and her resources far less, for the system of taxation in Spain had for some time past crushed the industrial and commercial life of the country as completely as if it had been designed for that end, and no Colbert had arisen to give her industries a new impulse. The monarchy of Spain had, like that of France, tried to crush out all local and provincial liberties; but it had been directed with far less vigour and intelligence. Local and provincial feeling still subsisted in great strength, but they had no constitutional outlets, and hence there was a constant danger of secret and revolutionary movements against the Crown. The upper classes and the countless ecclesiastics were privileged and exempt from taxation. The complete success of the Counter-Reformation in Spain, though it had corresponded to the temper and wishes of the people, had depressed all thought and speculation, and kept the country in the old, and now ruinous, routine. The vast wealth of the Church, its innumerable monastic establishments, and its encouragement of mendicancy were among the chief causes of the poverty of the country. The thoughts and the imagination of the people were turned to the past: hardly an effort was made to adapt the government or occupations of the country to the changing needs of the age. The population had alarmingly decreased. It was estimated that in the days of Charles V there had been twenty millions of inhabitants in the peninsula; but in the year 1700 the estimate was between six and seven millions. The former estimate was probably too high, the latter too low; but that the decrease in the population was really very great does not admit of doubt. The army had sunk in the reign of Charles II to an ill-paid and ill-equipped force of about twenty thousand men; and during the whole course of the war, which was about to break out, Spain, once

so fertile in great captains, did not produce a single soldier of note. The dignity, the courage, the heroic fibre of the people were still there; but the political effectiveness of Spain as a State had departed. She had been called "a colossus stuffed with clouts" by an English observer in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and the estimate was at last generally seen to be true.

The discussion as to the future of the Spanish dominions went on mainly outside of Spain. No one thought of consulting the wishes of the Spanish people. The controversy was conducted as though it were a law-suit for some great inheritance; "as though," said Fénelon, "a nation could belong to a woman like a meadow or a vineyard." Both the royal House of France and the Imperial House put forward claims. Louis XIV had married Maria Theresa, the daughter of Philip IV of Spain and sister of the reigning King Charles II. It is indeed true that at the time of his marriage he had renounced all possible claims that might come to him through his wife, but, as we have seen in dealing with the War of Devolution, he had found reasons for setting the renunciation aside, when it stood in the way of a comparatively small prize: he was not likely to let it stand in the way of an ambition so much greater. He never indeed proposed that the Crown of Spain should be bestowed on any French prince in the direct line; but in secrecy he pressed the claims of his grandson Philip, the second son of the Dauphin.

The Candidates for the Spanish throne.

(1) France.

The Emperor Leopold put forward a claim to the Spanish succession, founded on the fact that he was cousin of King Charles II, since his mother had been Maria, sister of Philip IV, and the younger daughter of Philip III. He was indeed further removed from the Royal House of Spain than Louis XIV, but no renunciation stood in his way. But to join the Empire to Spain would have been to restore the days of Charles V, when

(2) The Empire.

the power of the House of the Habsburgs, established in Antwerp, in Vienna, and in Madrid, threatened to dominate and oppress Europe. Leopold thought to conciliate public opinion by proposing that the Spanish succession should pass out of the direct imperial line to his second son the Archduke Charles.

(3) Bavaria.

There remained only one other serious claimant, for no one paid much attention to the claim of the King of Portugal. But the Electoral House of Bavaria put forward a claim in some respects more acceptable to European statesmanship than either of the other two. The Elector of Bavaria, Max Emmanuel, had married Maria Antonia, daughter of the Emperor Leopold I and Margaret Theresa, sister of Charles II. Maria Antonia was dead, but her rights had passed on to the infant Electoral Prince, Joseph Ferdinand, who in 1700 was seven years old. Maria Antonia had indeed at the time of her marriage to the Elector renounced all claims upon the Spanish inheritance, but the renunciation had not been ratified, and Philip IV in his will had preferred her claims to those of her elder sister. In the eyes of European statesmen this claim was immensely strengthened by the fact that the union of Spain with the Bavarian House would not threaten the equilibrium of Europe, as would her union with France or the Empire. Few more difficult questions have ever occupied the diplomatists of Europe.

The Partition Treaties.

It was clear that the situation was only too likely to develop into a great European war. The only way to avoid it would be for the Powers to agree upon some course before the crisis arrived. The question was no new one for the diplomatists of Europe, and as far back as 1668 there had been negotiations on the matter between Louis XIV and the Emperor Leopold, which resulted in a treaty of partition, whereby Louis was to receive the Spanish Netherlands, Franche Comté, Naples, Sicily, Navarre, and certain colonial possessions in Africa and the Pacific, while

the Spanish Crown and the rest of its possessions were to go to the Imperial House. It was thought then that the death of Charles II was imminent, and the anticipation had induced Louis to accept the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Thirty-two years had passed since then, and the European situation had materially changed, especially through the reappearance of England as a strong power in opposition to France. Louis XIV now reopened the question and made overtures to William with a view to some peaceful compromise, and these were not rejected. William did not indeed trust Louis, and would have liked to keep the armies of England and Holland on a war footing, so as to be ready to resist his ambition. But the English Parliament thwarted his plans, and insisted on a reduction of the army, and William therefore accepted the idea of partition as the best thing possible in the circumstances. William's sincerity in the matter is unquestionable; but what of the motives of Louis XIV? He has been accused of using the Partition Treaties merely as a blind, and of having made William the dupe of his "unscrupulous falseness." But the circumstances do not seem to justify such a view. The care with which the Partition Treaties were drawn up, the prolonged struggle over details, and the sincere debate, which was held at last as to whether the Spanish inheritance should be accepted, make it impossible to believe that Louis XIV had all along determined to seize the Spanish Crown at all costs. It seems rather probable that, in the uncertainty and difficulty which attended every course, Louis followed a double line of policy, tried to ingratiate himself with Spain—a task admirably performed by the Marquis of Harcourt as French ambassador at Madrid—and at the same time drew up with England the Treaties of Partition, leaving it to circumstances to decide which of these two courses should in the end be preferred.

The Treaties of Partition may be simply stated without dwelling on the efforts of diplomacy which led up to them. There was a long negotiation between Pomponne, on the

French side, and Portland, the representative of England, which lasted from March until October (1698). An arrangement was at last made and signed on October 11 at the Hague. The bulk of the Spanish possessions was to go to the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, while France was to have Naples and Sicily, with Finale in Liguria and Guipuscoa in the Pyrenees; and the Archduke Charles, the Duchy of Milan, a territory to which the Empire had long asserted its rights. The arrangement would have been a very useful one for France, for it would have removed the Habsburg power from her frontiers, where it had threatened her for centuries, and would have substituted a house usually hostile to that of Austria. The treaty was a secret one, but it was soon known in Madrid, perhaps through French channels. Spanish feeling was outraged by seeing the great historic opponents of Spain—England, which had crushed her maritime power, France, which had destroyed her continental prestige, Holland, which had made a fragment of her dominions into a powerful independent republic—arrogating to themselves the right of deciding her fate. The desire grew stronger to maintain the unity and integrity of the Spanish dominions at all costs. Charles II was induced to make his will, leaving the whole of the Spanish dominions to the Electoral Prince (19 Jan. 1699). The will was something very different from the Treaty of Partition, but as both agreed on the recipient of the greater part of the inheritance, there was a chance—the last chance—of a peaceful settlement. But on the 8th Feb. 1699, the infant Prince, on whose head so many hopes were centred, died. Rumour even charged the Emperor with having poisoned him: the rumour has no foundation that can be discovered, but it deserves mention, as having helped to embitter the hostility between the Elector and the Emperor. The work of treaty-weaving had to be begun again, and a second Partition Treaty was signed at the Hague on the 28th March, 1700. By this second arrangement, the Archduke Charles was to get the bulk of the inheritance—Spain and the Netherlands and the Indies:

France was to take Milan, in addition to the Two Sicilies and the other acquisitions mentioned in the first treaty. This treaty was far less favourable to France than the first one. The Austrian power would surround her more closely and dangerously than ever, and the gain of possessions in Italy, difficult to maintain unless France had control of the seas, was a poor compensation. The treaty was communicated to the Emperor by Villars, who was the French representative at Vienna. He gives us in his memoirs no indication that his master was not in earnest in the matter; but in the end Leopold refused to acquiesce in the arrangement, and, when further representations were made to him, only reiterated his refusal.

Meanwhile the health of the King of Spain showed that the end was coming. The Treaties of Partition had aroused the liveliest indignation in Spain, and yet through it all France was popular. For Spanish pride desired above all things the maintenance of the unity of the Spanish Empire, and the opinion gained ground that only the King of France was strong enough to secure that end. Louis XIV had been secretly asked whether he would accept the defence of the Spanish inheritance in case it was left to one of his grandchildren, and he had pointedly refused to reply in the negative. At first Charles II leaned strongly to his Austrian relations, and in Vienna it was confidently anticipated that the Austrian claimant would be successful. But many influences in favour of France were brought to bear upon the dying King. One of the strongest came through a religious channel. Cardinal Portocarrero had great power over him, and he was induced to apply to the Pope for advice. It could hardly be doubtful that the Pope would desire to keep together the vast territories of Spain under a rule essentially Spanish, for she was the very stronghold of vigorous Catholicism. In September Charles received a letter from Pope Innocent XII, advising him to leave his possessions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, the grandson of Louis XIV. At last on

October 1st the will was drawn up and signed and sealed. The secret of its contents was better kept than is usually the case with such secrets. The Austrians still cherished strong hopes. But when Charles died (1 Nov. 1700), and the will was opened, it was found that he had declared for Philip, Duke of Anjou, with many admonitions to preserve the Catholic faith intact, to obey the Pope and "honour and aid" the Inquisition.

A courier brought the news to the French Court on November 9. The most serious question which Louis XIV had to face during the whole of his long reign demanded an immediate answer. He at once called a council, consisting of the Dauphin, the Chancellor Pontchartrain, Torci (Minister of Foreign Affairs), and the Duke of Beauvilliers. Madame de Maintenon was not an official member of the Council, but her opinion now as always had weight. It is impossible to discover exactly what were the opinions of each member of the Council, but it is certain that there was debate, and that voices were raised against accepting the will. But in the end it was decided to accept it. The temptation was so great that it could hardly be otherwise. It seemed at the time the culminating point in the long struggle of France and Spain. A prince of the House of France would mount the throne of Charles V. After so many wars, spread over centuries, for a strip of frontier or a part of a province, it seemed now that a single stroke of the pen would gain for France the whole of the vast dominions of Spain. Louis is reported to have said to his grandson in bidding farewell to him on his journey to Spain, "The Pyrenees exist no longer"; and the phrase sums up the situation, as it presented itself to the hopeful eyes of French statesmen in 1700. The Dauphin protested against the wrong that would be done to his son if the inheritance were refused. Other reasons besides those of ambition could be alleged in favour of acceptance; for peace would not by any means be guaranteed by adhesion to the Partition Treaty. The

Empire had more than once refused to acquiesce; it was doubtful whether the maritime Powers would really give it their support, for they had no desire to see France posted in command of the Mediterranean, as she would be if she possessed Naples and Sicily. War then would come in either case, and Louis XIV preferred to fight for the larger stake. Madame de Maintenon supported that resolution: it was, she said, "an affair of honour." On Nov. 16, 1700, Louis presented his grandson to the Court at Versailles with the words, "Gentlemen you see the King of Spain." Philip left Versailles on December 4, and entered Madrid as Philip V on the 18th February, 1701.

After this momentous decision a considerable European war was inevitable: but it was not yet certain what form it would take, nor who would be the combatants. The action of England and Holland was especially doubtful. In England William tried to stir up popular opinion to enthusiasm for war, but quite in vain. Parliament had insisted on the disbanding of the troops; even the news of the death and will of Charles II could not persuade the country to put the army on a war footing. It seems indeed probable that if Louis had used his diplomatic machinery with his old skill, if he had done his best to persuade Europe that the separation between the Crowns of France and Spain was to be real and permanent, if he had avoided all fresh causes of misunderstanding and offence, the armies, navies, and exchequers of England and Holland would not have been thrown on the side of his opponents, and the War of the Spanish Succession would have been fought out between France and Austria alone. But Louis did not mean to make the separation between the Crowns of France and Spain real and permanent. The moderation that had characterised some of his earlier diplomatic efforts had deserted him now. He seemed to himself a new Charlemagne, with Europe in the hollow of his hand, and already looked forward to the possibility of the union of the two Crowns. As

soon as Philip of Anjou, henceforward to be known as Philip V of Spain, had reached Madrid, letters patent registered by the Parlement of Paris were presented to him by which Louis recognised his right to succeed to the French Crown in case all the nearer claimants disappeared. This was doubtless kept secret, but soon certain open acts showed European statesmen in what temper and with what aspirations Louis regarded the change in his affairs. First of all, he showed the Dutch that the military forces of France and Spain were henceforth to be united. By the Treaty of Ryswick, and in consequence of the obvious weakness of Spain, Dutch garrisons had been placed in the Spanish fortresses of Luxemburg, Mons, Charleroi, and some others, to defend them against a possible French attack. These Dutch troops were now expelled, and their places taken, not by Spaniards, but by Frenchmen.

Later in the year, when the struggle had already begun, when William was trying in vain to infuse some enthusiasm for the war into the reluctant English Parliament, Louis deeply offended English susceptibilities and awakened English suspicions. James II died on September 10, 1701, and before his death Louis XIV promised to "take his family under his protection, to treat the Prince of Wales as he had treated his father, and to regard him as King of England." The late Queen of England implored Madame de Maintenon to persuade Louis to redeem the promise, "to give him the empty title, all that remained to him of so much glory." Louis consented, but when the news reached England, it profoundly stirred public opinion. It was in vain that Louis, conscious at last of the mistake that he had made, tried in some measure to redeem his error by representing the title of "James III. of England," which he bestowed upon the prince, as merely a title of courtesy, such as that of "King of France" which was still borne by the Kings of England. To the people of England the step seemed a deliberate breach of the Treaty of Ryswick

and a standing threat against the Parliamentary settlement of the English Crown. The old Parliament was dissolved, and the new one, which met in December 1701, was of a much more warlike temper. William appealed to it for an energetic protest against the "high indignity" which had been offered to him and to the nation, and he found a ready response. The new Grand Alliance came into being. The struggle was no longer between France and the Empire, but between France and a vast European coalition.

The alliance thus opposed to France consisted of the Empire and Austria, with England and Holland, as leaders; but these were supported by the King of Prussia, to whom the Emperor had conceded the title of King instead of Elector, in return for 10,000 men whom he was to furnish during the war; and the Elector of Hanover, whose possible succession to the English Crown bound him to the side of the Allies. They did not, at first, aim at the displacement of Philip from the throne of Spain. That object was not definitely announced until 1703: at first the Allies declared that they desired only to procure some compensation of a sufficient kind for the Austrian Archduke. But their aims extended as the war proceeded. The issue was plainer when the Austrian Charles was the avowed claimant for the throne occupied by the French Philip; but at first the Allies appeared not as conquerors or aggressors, but as the upholders of the balance of power in Europe. It was a remarkably strong alliance. From Germany came an inexhaustible supply of troops, which were paid with English and Dutch money. Few great European alliances have suffered less than this from divided purposes and conflicts among its leaders. William III was at first the soul of the alliance, and after his death in March 1702 the Allies found in the Duke of Marlborough a successor well able to undertake the task, and to carry on the struggle to which William had dedicated his life. Opinions have been, and will probably always be, divided

The combatants, alliances and prospects of the war.

as to the character of Marlborough. He cannot lay claim to the high statesmanship, the indomitable perseverance, the strong sense of duty which were characteristic of William III. He was fighting throughout, not so much for the interests of Europe at large, nor even for the true interests of England or of his party, as for his own position and advancement. But as a diplomatist, he was the equal of William, and as a soldier, he was vastly his superior. He had served in the French army under Turenne at the time of the invasion of Holland, and knew all the improvements which had been made in France in the material of war as well as in the art of fortification and in tactics. He was the first to break the military prestige of the French armies, and it is only the persistent egotism of his career which has prevented his name from ranking among the greatest of Englishmen. He managed from the beginning of the war to establish a relation of warm confidence and friendship with the chief general of the Imperial armies, the Prince Eugène. Prince Eugène was half French by origin, and, like Marlborough, had learnt in France all the military science that could be taught him there. But he had found himself slighted by Louis in his ambition, and had therefore passed over to the Empire, where he had already brilliantly distinguished himself in war against the Turks. He was reckoned slower and more methodical than Marlborough, but the perfect unison between the two made an almost ideal direction of the war. The Pensionary Heinsius guided the affairs of the United Provinces, for on the death of William III the Stadtholdership had been again abolished. He heartily supported Marlborough and Eugène.

No such promising allies were to be found on the side of France. Her union with Spain was a danger, not a help, for the Spanish territories offered innumerable opportunities for attack, especially to the naval Powers, and the Spanish forces were quite inadequate to repel them. The responsibility of guarding Spain was therefore a constant drain upon the

resources of France. "France bound to the Spanish monarchy," it has been said, "was like the living bound to the dead"; she found herself far weaker than when she stood alone and had full liberty of movement. Much more valuable were the alliances of the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne. Max Emmanuel of Bavaria had thrown himself heartily upon the side of France, attracted by the promise of the Netherlands, and repelled from Austria by the opposition which the Emperor had made to the Bavarian claims, and the suspicion of foul play which attached to the death of the Electoral Prince. While the resistance of Bavaria to the Imperial plans remained uncrushed, the march of Imperial armies towards France was rendered difficult, and a dangerous enemy was always in the rear. The Bavarian alliance offered the best hope, perhaps the only hope, which could be reasonably entertained of ending the war by a decided victory for France. Clement, the Elector of Cologne, was the brother of the Elector of Bavaria, and though his election had been so hotly opposed by France, and had been one of the causes of the war of 1688, he was drawn now to the side of his old enemies. Besides these France had at first two other allies—the King of Portugal and the Duke of Savoy. Portugal had won its independence largely through the assistance of France, and had been for sixty years in alliance with her. The Duke of Savoy had married one daughter to the Duke of Burgundy, and another to Philip V of Spain. But motives of relationship and tradition did not in the long run prove strong enough to retain these States upon the side of France. Portugal, feeling herself threatened by the maritime preponderance of the Allies, abandoned the French cause before any real fighting had taken place. Savoy, after a short and not very valuable support of French plans, was drawn over to the side of the Allies by higher promises and greater powers of performing them.

We have seen that the finances of France were in deplorable confusion. It is plain too that the condition and prestige

of the French army were no longer what they had been. The armies were large, and the courage of the soldiers was rarely at fault during the whole of the war, despite the methods of recruitment so adversely criticised by Vauban. But in the command there was a falling off, even as compared with the last war; and the King's power of choosing the right men, which had once been so conspicuous, often failed him. Villeroi, Catinat, and Marsin held commands, but rarely with success. Vendôme, Berwick, and Villars were the men who gained most reputation out of this disastrous war. Vendôme was a grandson of Henry IV, and in the vices of his private life, in his alternations of energy and listlessness, as well as in his dash and vigour at the critical moment, resembled Luxemburg. Berwick was Marlborough's nephew, and possessed a considerable measure of his coolness and skill. It was upon Villars that most of the scanty laurels of the war rested. He alone, among French generals, ever faced Marlborough and gained credit from the collision. His memoirs show him to us the best type of the French nobleman of the period, always boastful, but usually justifying his boast, morbidly sensitive on the point of honour, independent in character, yet devoted to the King. It was he who, after a long period of failure, threw over the last years of Louis' reign a ray of glory. Nor had the great ministers of Louis' early reign found any adequate successors. The situation was doubtless far more difficult, the means at their command much smaller; but it is clear that no Louvois, no Colbert, no Lionne was to be found in France at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Pontchartrain threw up the post of finance Minister in despair at the approach of the war and was succeeded by Chamillart, who in his turn was replaced by Voisin and Desmarets. None of them struck at the root of the financial troubles; perhaps the time permitted of no drastic remedy. Foreign affairs were in the hands of Torci, Colbert's nephew, who displayed much skill in a hopeless task. But the ruling spirit in France was more than ever the King himself.

His activity and energy were undiminished. But he monopolised affairs too much: he grew fond of young Ministers who were not likely to oppose his will, or to take any independent line of action. If the Memoir-writers are to be trusted, there were occasions when the news of recent disasters was concealed from him; but on the whole his character shows more attractively during the last and losing struggle than during the early period of glory.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.

THE whole of Western Europe was concerned in the war, and it was fought out on five main theatres:—the Netherlands and the Rhine frontier, which may usually be considered together, Bavaria, Italy, and Spain. There was also during the early years of the war a serious revolt of the Protestants in the Cevennes. It will make the course of the war clearer if we state at the outset into what divisions it naturally falls. (1) First, there was a period from 1701 to 1704 during which the balance of success did not incline decisively to either side. The Battle of Blenheim unmistakeably terminated that period. (2) Secondly, from 1704 to 1709 a succession of disasters fell on France, except towards the end of the period in Spain itself. France was induced to supplicate for peace, but impossible terms were offered her, and the war was renewed. (3) From 1709 to 1713 the fortune of war became, contrary to all expectation, less hostile to France. Her army was indeed defeated at Malplaquet, but gained confidence and self-respect from the defeat. In Spain the war turned wholly against the Allies. A political change in England brought the peace-party to power and withdrew England from the coalition. Austria left to herself was defeated, and France in the end gained terms far more favourable than she could at one time have hoped for.

The different theatres and phases of the war.

France and the Empire had fallen to blows before the Grand Alliance had been definitely re-formed, and while the action of England and Holland was still a little uncertain. The collision took place in Italy, where the chances seemed very favourable to France. The alliance of Savoy opened the passages of the Alps. The Duke of Mantua was friendly, and allowed the French to garrison both Mantua and Casale. Modena, Guastalla, Parma, and Venice were neutral. The Spaniards were prepared to make a great effort to retain Milan, and the primary ambition of Austria was to acquire it. Catinat, the victor of Marsaglia, was sent to prevent an Austrian army from descending into Italy through the Tyrolese passes. He was doubtless a very capable general, but was judged on this occasion to err through excess of caution. Moreover he was influenced by rationalistic philosophy, and was therefore viewed with suspicion by the King, who, as Madame de Maintenon tells us, "did not like to entrust military commands to irreligious people." In spite of Catinat's efforts Eugène brought a force of 25,000 men over the Tyrolese passes and down the Adige. He defeated Catinat at Carpi (July, 1701) on the Adige, and then with great boldness pushed on for Milan. In spite of the difficulties of the country he crossed the Mincio and the Oglio; and Catinat, though his forces were superior in numbers, preferred to cover the Milanese territory, rather than fight a battle. But in Paris great discontent was expressed at this inauspicious opening of the campaign. Villeroi, the King's personal favourite, was sent out to supersede Catinat, with orders to bring on a decisive engagement as soon as possible. Villeroi, therefore, repassed the Oglio and attacked Eugène at Chiari, but was sharply defeated. This was the end of military operations for the year. Early in the next spring (Feb. 1702) Eugène attempted to surprise Cremona by an underground passage under the fortifications, which had been revealed to him by a priest. At first the attack was successful,

The war to the Battle of Blenheim.

1. Italy.

and Villeroi himself fell into the hands of the enemy; but then the French troops rallied, and Eugène was driven out. Paris did not share the King's liking for Villeroi, and a popular song declared that the French had gained a double victory: they had kept Cremona and lost Villeroi. His place was taken by Vendôme, lazy, debauched and gluttonous, but in the hour of battle an extremely capable general. Philip V, the new King of Spain, himself joined the French army, though his presence was a hindrance rather than a help to Vendôme. Eugène laid siege to Mantua, and its loss would have been so serious that Vendôme determined to risk much to relieve it. He not only succeeded in his object, but pushed after Eugène and attacked him fiercely at Luzzara (on the Po, to the south of Mantua). Eugène maintained his position, but still the advantage on the year's fighting lay with France. But a worse blow than a defeat in the field had fallen upon the French during the year: for the Duke of Savoy had passed over to the enemy, allured by the promise of greater territorial gains on both sides of the Alps than France had been willing to offer.

2. The rising in the Cevennes.

Before passing to the other theatres of the war we may notice that in 1702 a serious revolt had broken out in the heart of France itself. A Protestant spirit had existed in the Cevennes district for centuries, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had embittered instead of repressing it. In 1702 the discontent broke out into open rebellion. In July of that year the Abbé du Cheyla, who had carried on a relentless persecution in the district, was murdered in his own house, and the revolt flared up on all sides.

The events that follow are a strange phenomenon in the rational and sober age of Louis XIV. Men and women fell into wild hysteric ecstasies, and prophesied to crowds of peasants, who thought their half-coherent words inspired; it was even alleged, and by their opponents, that at such moments uneducated girls spoke Greek and Hebrew. What they said

was doubtless unintelligible to their hearers. The leaders of the revolt were peasants. Cavalier, a young man, twenty-two years of age, was the chief: Roland was the most notable of those who served under him. They were called *Camisards*, from their habit of putting shirts over their clothes that they might know one another in their night attacks. At first the Government neglected the new danger: if we may believe Saint Simon, Madame de Maintenon concealed it for some time from the King. Then as good a force as could be spared from the great war was sent against the Camisards. It was defeated at first; but when Montrevel, a marshal of France, took command, such encounters as took place were usually in favour of the King's troops, and Montrevel tried to increase the advantage he had gained by atrocious tortures and executions. This was not likely to crush out fanaticism, but rather to increase it. Miracles were reported: the agents of the Government expressed astonishment at the absolute *sang froid* with which the tortures were faced: the rebellion grew under the blows inflicted upon it. It was not until Villars was despatched to the disturbed district that real progress was made in subduing the rebellion. He offered terms to those who yielded, while he waged incessant war against those who resisted. Those who submitted to the King were to be allowed either to sell their property and emigrate, or to remain in France with full personal liberty, except of worship. In May 1704 these terms were embodied in a treaty. Cavalier himself surrendered and offered to serve in a force which it was proposed to raise from the ranks of the insurgents. He was given the rank of colonel; but soon became suspicious of the intentions of the French and passed over to the national enemy. The discontented and fanatical spirit was by no means dead, but by the end of 1704 the real danger was over.

In the Low Countries Marlborough was meanwhile in command of the allied forces (1702). He struck at the Bishopric of Liège, so as to clear the line of

3. The Netherlands.

the Meuse, and throw open that road of entrance into France. His first campaign was in many ways typical of the whole war. He had to overcome great difficulties, caused as much by the perversity of the Dutch leaders as by the strength of the enemy: but his energy and tact overcame them all, and he succeeded in capturing Venloo, Roermond, Steevenswert and Liège, all of them strong places on the course of the Meuse. But at first the real pivot of the war was to be found in Bavaria. If the French remained triumphant there, Vienna would be taken between two fires—for Hungary had broken out into revolt—and no really vigorous attack on France could be expected from the Imperialists.

4. Bavaria.

Till the year 1703, though there were fluctuations of fortune, the hopes of the French were high. Marshal Villars, who commanded on the Rhine frontier, was ordered to join the Elector of Bavaria. He defeated the Prince of Baden at Friedlingen in the Duchy of Baden in October 1702, and hoped to effect a junction with the Bavarians. But the Elector made no move to second him, for he was at this time negotiating with the Emperor; and Villars did not dare to penetrate into the Black Forest, on the chance of meeting his ally. The negotiations however came to nothing, and Philip V of Spain placed the alliance on a firmer basis by offering the Elector the Spanish Netherlands as a reward for fidelity. In March, 1703, therefore, Villars was able to make arrangements with the Elector, and succeeded in joining him. The French and Bavarians were now in superior numbers in the heart of the Empire. Vienna itself did not seem safe; and Villars urged an attack on it. The Emperor felt himself in great danger, for the Hungarians were seriously threatening his capital from the east; and if the Franco-Bavarian army had acted upon Villars' advice the city would have been hardly tenable. But the proposal was too daring for the Elector. He accepted the second suggestion of Villars, to march south into Tyrol,

and thus cut off the connection between Vienna and Italy, while Villars remained on the Danube and protected Bavaria. At first the Tyrolese expedition went very well. Innsbruck yielded without striking a blow. The Elector pushed on in order to join hands with Vendôme, who had marched up from Italy with a French army as far north as Trent. But meanwhile the mountaineers had recovered confidence and organised resistance. Without risking any open engagement they harassed the Elector's army with a guerilla warfare, such as the country and the character of the people were eminently suited for. The Elector found his position insecure and his supplies uncertain. He retreated rapidly and rejoined Villars: the expedition had been a complete failure. Even Bavaria seemed in danger, for the Prince of Baden resumed the offensive, and crossing the Danube at Ulm, took Augsburg and Munich; while the Imperial General, Styrum, led an army to his assistance and attempted to pass to the south of the Danube at Donauwerth. The junction of Villars and the Elector altered the situation, and on September 20 they defeated Styrum with very great loss at Hochstädt. The prospect was still a hopeful one for France, but now Villars entreated Louis XIV to recall him. He had quarrelled seriously with the Elector, first on points of etiquette, and latterly on large questions of policy. At last the King granted him leave to withdraw (Nov. 1703). He was sent, as we have seen, to the Cevennes, while Marshal Marsin took his place in Bavaria. Marsin's reputation was soon to sink very low indeed; but his career in Bavaria opened brightly. Augsburg, Ratisbon, and Passau fell into his hands. By the end of the year the Franco-Bavarian army seemed more securely established on the Danube than ever: a victorious ending of the war, in favour of France, seemed not impossible. The whole attention of the Allies was turned towards the Danube.

Prince Eugène, who presided over the Imperial Council of war, insisted that it was before all things necessary to crush

the enemy in Bavaria. The Duke of Marlborough was in perfect agreement with him on this point, and, since the Imperial forces were not sufficient by themselves to crush the French and Bavarians, he agreed to bring a great part of his own army to the assistance of Prince Eugène. He feigned an attack along the Moselle, but crossed the Rhine at Cologne, and on June 4 had reached the Neckar, which he crossed at Heilbronn. He had an interview with Eugène at Rastadt on June 16, and on the 22nd their forces joined at Geislingen near Ulm, and then entered the valley of the Danube. The French were quite aware of the danger that threatened them. A considerable army had been sent from the Rhine to reinforce Marsin, and on August 3 he was joined by Marshal Tallard himself. But the reinforcements had not enabled the Elector to hold his ground against the united army of the Allies. He evacuated Donauwerth, Neuburg, and Ratisbon, and only retained Ulm and Ingolstadt on the Danube. He had fallen back on Augsburg, but was persuaded by Marsin to cross to the north of the Danube. The two armies now faced one another near Hochstädt—the scene of the victory of the Elector and Villars. Marshal Tallard on the right occupied the village of Blenheim: the Elector and Marshal Marsin were stationed on the left at Lutzingen. The field of battle was an open space between the Danube on the south and some hills on the north. A stream flowed from the hills into the Danube and divided the two armies. Marlborough was posted over against Tallard, while Eugène faced the Elector and Marsin. The army of the Allies numbered about 50,000, the French and Bavarians about 56,000. But the French cavalry was dangerously weak; their horses were suffering from disease, and they could hardly hope to hold their own against the English and Dutch horse. It was the cavalry that really decided the day; for while Eugène was attacking the Elector, and the issue was still uncertain in that part of the field, Marlborough, after heavy fighting, forced his

Blenheim.

way across the stream. His cavalry charged the enemy, broke them and turned their defeat into a rout. The Elector and Marsin drew off their forces in order, but with very considerable loss. It was on Tallard's force that the blow fell most heavily. He himself was captured, and 10,000 men cooped up in Blenheim found themselves in so hopeless a case, that they were forced to surrender. Besides these prisoners, the Franco-Bavarians had lost from twelve to fourteen thousand in killed and wounded. The whole of Bavaria fell into the hands of the Allies. Villeroi might perhaps have maintained his position at Stollhofen, but something like a panic had fallen upon the French commanders at the unexpected blow. Marsin and Villeroi, though with their united forces they might have seriously harassed Eugène and Marlborough even after the victory, made no effort to do so and transferred the whole of their troops to the left bank of the Rhine. Germany to the east of the river soon fell into the hands of the enemy. The war became on the side of France almost entirely a defensive one. Her loss of prestige was not the least important thing about the battle. Since the battle of Pavia she had suffered no such overwhelming loss. It seemed to many that the war must quickly end by the abject submission of France.

5. Spain.

Another theatre of the war the Spanish Peninsula—now claims our attention. From the first it became clear that Spain would be quite unable to give help to France, but would rather require help herself. If the Allies were to attack Spain, all turned on the command of the sea; and France was too weak to dispute it. An English attack on Cadiz was repulsed, largely through the energy of the young Queen, Marie Louise of Savoy, whom Philip V had just married; but in Oct. 1703, the Allies fell upon a Spanish merchant fleet escorted by fifteen French war-vessels in Vigo Bay. Chateau-Renaud, the French admiral, burned ten of his vessels; the other five fell into the hand of the Allies; all the merchant-vessels were taken or burnt. In May 1703, Portugal joined

the Grand Alliance. The Archduke Charles went to Lisbon and was proclaimed Charles III of Spain. No great events occurred on Spanish soil during the early years of the war, but the summer of 1704, so fatal to French hopes on the Danube, was almost equally disastrous in Spain. On August 4, Gibraltar fell into the hands of the English; and on the 24th a French fleet of fifty-two vessels, which was coming up to its relief, was attacked by an English fleet of some sixty sail and was forced to retire after a very courageous resistance. It was a day of honour for the French navy; but it was the last time during the war that France made any considerable effort at sea.

From Blenheim to the failure of Peace Negociations in 1709.

The position of France seemed so much injured by the Battle of Blenheim and the other disasters of that disastrous year, that hopes were entertained on the side of the Allies of a speedy end to the war, and even of terms dictated in Paris. These hopes were doomed to disappointment. During the next four years France received blow after blow; what surprises us is, not that she tottered but that she did not fall.

1. Italy.

At the time of the Battle of Blenheim France was struggling in Italy on fairly even terms with the Empire. Vendôme had regained much of what Villeroi had lost, and only Turin remained in the hands of the Duke of Savoy. The issue of the war was still uncertain, when in 1705 Eugène took command of the Imperial army in Italy. After gaining certain small successes he was sharply beaten by Vendôme at Cassano on the Adda. It became impossible for the Imperialists to give help to Turin, and the French proceeded to blockade that important place. Eugène's troubles were not at an end. Vendôme pushed him from point to point, until at last he was driven to take refuge in Tyrol. In 1706 all turned on the siege of Turin. This city was now all that was left to the Duke of Savoy; if the place were taken all the north of Italy would be in the hands of France and her allies.

Vast preparations were made for the siege; but the French Government committed mistake upon mistake; the chief was that they entrusted the command of the blockading army to La Feuillade, a son-in-law of Chamillard, and refused the services of Vauban, who was just then out of favour at Court. But the fall of Turin was certain if the campaign were conducted with energy and vigilance.

Vendôme meanwhile watched the lines of the Adige, in order to prevent, if possible, the arrival of an Imperial relieving force. But he displayed little capacity for his task. In July Eugène crossed the Brenner with a large force, outwitted Vendôme, passed first the Adige and then the Po, and forced his way up the right bank of the Po towards Turin. At no point in the war was the incompetence of the French generals and the demoralisation of their armies so marked as during this Italian campaign. Eugène had a difficult route to traverse, cut by rivers and offering many opportunities for resistance, but no serious effort was made to stop him. While Vendôme remained there was always a chance that a brilliant feat of arms might restore the situation; but, just at this juncture, Vendôme was recalled to take charge of the northern frontier in place of Villeroi, who had been disgraced. Vendôme urged the King to send out Marshal Berwick to take his place, but Marsin and the Duke of Orléans were appointed instead, while La Feuillade still conducted the siege operations. Eugène recrossed the Po in September 1706, and joined the forces of the Duke of Savoy to the north of Turin. This march is one of Eugène's greatest feats of arms, and would have been rash to foolhardiness if he had not counted on the incapacity of the generals opposed to him. The French army before Turin was in the greatest difficulty. There was no plan agreed upon. The Duke of Orléans urged that they should go out and fight Eugène, for their numbers were considerably greater than his. Marsin was for awaiting his attack within the French lines, and he believed they were strong

enough to resist even if they were assaulted by the enemy from within the town at the same time: the controversy was settled by Marsin producing a letter from the King, which gave him the final right of decision in case of dispute. Eugène attacked the lines on Sept. 7, and found everything in the greatest confusion. The lines were easily forced, and the city relieved. Marsin was killed, with a very large number of his soldiers. The Duke of Orléans drew off the rest, and at first meant to fall back on Casale, so as to defend Milan. The troops, however, were thoroughly demoralised, and, breaking out into mutiny, insisted on making for France. They marched in the wildest confusion; but Eugène did not pursue them. He was as completely master of Italy as he had been master of Bavaria after Blenheim. Milan, Lodi, Pavia and many other towns gave themselves up to the Duke of Savoy and Eugène, and the Austrian Archduke, Charles III of Spain, was proclaimed Duke of Milan. Casale fell into the hands of the Allies, and in March 1707 Louis XIV consented to a treaty whereby he agreed to abandon Italy. In July, Naples was occupied by the Austrians. The war, so far as Italy was concerned, was over. Even Susa, which had remained in the hands of France after the treaty of March, 1707, was taken from them in October. The French aggressions upon Italy, which had given so many chapters of glory and disaster to French history, were not renewed for nearly a century.

2. The Netherlands.

If we turn to the northern frontier, we find France suffering defeats nearly as decisive as those we have noted in Italy. The year 1705 was, contrary to expectations, unproductive of great events in this quarter. Marlborough had made a plan for the invasion of France by the line of the Moselle; but great preparations and high hopes came to nothing. He found Villars in a very strong position, for he had entrenched himself very cleverly: his lines reached from Thionville to Saarlouis, and he was prepared to fight in defence of Metz. Marlborough meanwhile

was less strong than he had hoped to be, for the Prince of Baden had not brought up the reinforcements that were expected. After carefully reconnoitring Villars' position Marlborough fell back. But in 1706 events of the utmost importance took place. Villeroi was in command of the French forces, and his instructions allowed him to risk a battle. Marlborough on his side was determined to bring the campaign to a decisive issue. His march seemed to threaten Namur, and Villeroi threw himself in front of that fortress. The armies met near Ramillies. Marlborough deceived the French by a feigned attack on his left (at Autre Eglise), and then threw all his force against Ramillies. The place was carried and the French decisively beaten. In the retreat the baggage waggons broke down, a panic seized part of the army, and the retreat became a confused and frantic attempt to escape. Six thousand prisoners were taken, and the French army was for the moment broken up. The results of the battle were even more striking than the battle itself. All Brabant and most of Flanders yielded to the Allies. Louvain, Brussels, Antwerp, Oudenarde, Ostend fell, one after the other, into the hands of the English commander. The next step would take the invaders on to French soil. But the year 1707 was very different from what had been anticipated. On the northern frontier there was no event that calls for special comment. On the eastern frontier, Villars crossed the Rhine and by skilful strategy and some good luck pierced and destroyed the lines of Stollhofen, which were thought impregnable; and though he retired on the approach of a larger army he carried with him a vast booty. In the south, as we shall see shortly, the Allies laid siege to Toulon but received a disastrous repulse. The year was thus much the best that France had had since Blenheim, and it was hoped that diplomacy might make it more favourable still; for, while the war with which we are concerned was engrossing the attention of western Europe, the east and north were convulsed by the extraordinary career of Charles XII, the young King of

Sweden. He had crushed the armies of Denmark, Poland, Russia and Saxony; and now, like a new Gustavus Adolphus, stood victorious in Central Europe, hesitating whether he should strike east or west. Louis XIV hoped that he might be used in the interests of France against the Empire, as Richelieu had used Gustavus; but Marlborough's diplomacy, or his bribes, won the great Swede to opposite views. He turned east instead of west, decided to attack not Austria but Russia, and went to meet his fate at Pultawa.

In 1708 the Low Countries again became the centre of interest. Brabant and Flanders had yielded to the Allies, but were far from loyal to them. The religious feelings of the inhabitants were irritated against the English and Dutch. Ghent and Bruges expelled their garrisons, and went over to France. There was a report that Oudenarde would follow, and Marlborough had to defend the city from the French army that was coming up. But, even before these movements, it had been determined between Marlborough and Eugène to make a great effort against France in the north. Eugène was hurrying to his side with 80,000 men. He knew that a battle was imminent; he could not bring up his whole army in time, and therefore hurried on with a small escort to be at Marlborough's side when the crisis came. As on the field of Blenheim, there was perfect mutual understanding between the two great generals. But on the French side the picture is a very different one. Vendôme and the Duke of Burgundy—the grandson of Louis and the centre of the hopes of France—had been placed in joint command. There was little chance of sympathy between the pious, almost pietistic, nature of the Prince and the licentious genius of Vendôme. The French army was attacked unexpectedly near Oudenarde. It was weakened by a change of plan at the last moment, and even during the course of the battle Vendôme and the Duke of Burgundy issued contrary orders. Such mistakes counterbalanced the strong position the French had occupied. Eugène

1708.

on the right engaged and drove back the part of the army opposed to him, when it was taken in the rear by a detachment sent from the left by Marlborough. The defeat was severe but not overwhelming. Vendôme was for renewing the struggle, but the Duke of Burgundy insisted on retreat, and the whole army withdrew towards Ghent. The French frontier was undefended, and Marlborough proposed to push on into the heart of France. This daring proposal was discountenanced by Eugène, and it was determined instead to lay siege to Lille. The fortifications were reckoned Vauban's masterpiece; the city was defended by a large garrison under Marshal Boufflers; it was certain that great efforts would be made to prevent its fall. During the whole course of the siege prayers were offered on every side that this great French fortress, one of the earliest of the conquests of Louis XIV, might not fall into the enemy's hands. But the fortune of war, so faithful to Louis in his youth, when he had the assistance of heretic allies, deserted him in his orthodox old age. Vendôme and Burgundy were joined by Marshal Berwick, but he brought no harmony to their councils: rather there were three to quarrel instead of two. A convoy of provisions and siege implements was allowed to reach Marlborough. On August 12 the investment of Lille began. The French army marched up to the blockading lines, and all the world expected a great battle; but Berwick and the Duke of Burgundy were against an attack, and overruled Vendôme. The minister Chamillart was sent down to act as umpire. He ordered the attack, but after a cannonade of a few hours it was recognized that the Allies were too strongly posted, and the French withdrew. A last attempt to starve out the besiegers, by cutting off their communications with Ostend, also failed. Boufflers capitulated for the town of Lille on the 22nd October, and retired into the citadel. On the 10th of December he evacuated the citadel as well, and was allowed to go out with the honours of war. The place had cost a vast number of lives, but its loss was the most striking evidence

of the weakness of France that had appeared since Blenheim. Soon afterwards, in Jan. 1709, Ghent was recaptured by the Allies.

The disasters of these years had been a little relieved by French victories in other quarters. We have observed that Villars with the army of the Rhine had, in 1707, captured the lines of Stollhofen, and French detachments had again been seen as conquerors in the upper valley of the Danube.

3. Southern France.

In the same year Prince Eugène and the Duke of Savoy determined to penetrate Provence and attack Toulon. If the expedition had been successful it would perhaps have had a decisive influence on the war, but Marshal Tessé marched to defend Toulon with a large army, and there was no sign of the expected Protestant rising. Eugène, as soon as he realised the situation, discountenanced the siege. The Duke of Savoy insisted on attempting it, but in August even he had to recognise that it was hopeless, and the Allies retired from French soil.

Spanish affairs remain to be noticed. Nowhere were the fluctuations of the war so remarkable, or its result so unexpected as here. It seemed at first as though the Allies were about to gain victories as decisive as in Italy, Bavaria, or the Low Countries. We have seen already that they held undisputed mastery of the seas, that Portugal had joined the Allies, and that Gibraltar was in the hands of the English. They found, too, a useful ally in the strong provincial sentiment of northern Spain, which all the efforts of the Spanish Kings from Charles V to Charles II had been unable to destroy. Catalonia regretted her provincial independence and her lost representative assembly, and in June 1705 concluded a treaty with England. In August a force appeared on the coast and proclaimed the Austrian Archduke Charles King of Spain. His brother, Joseph, had in May 1705, succeeded to the Austrian throne after the death of Leopold I. Barcelona was attacked by the Allies under Lord

4. Spain.

Peterborough and surrendered in October. In the following spring King Philip made a desperate attempt to recover it, and was powerfully assisted by the French; but, when victory seemed certain, the British fleet came up and relieved the place. At the same time the Spaniards had been defeated on the Portuguese frontier, and the hopes of Philip V sank to their very lowest point. Aragon was carried away by the tide of success. She too had her own provincial ambitions and regrets, and in May 1606 recognised Charles as King. No resistance was met with anywhere. When the army of the Allies pushed forward to Madrid, Philip V found himself incapable of making a stand. The capital was entered on July 25, 1706, and Charles III was proclaimed King. But the position of the Allies was quite unstable, the prospect of a speedy end to the war quite delusive. The fate of Spain has never been decided in Madrid. It needed defeat to make the 'flinty and indomitable' spirit of Spain manifest itself. If Catalonia and Aragon rebelled against Philip for reasons of provincial ambition, the same considerations made Castille zealous on his side. The people of that ancient kingdom remembered their great past and rose in indignation at the idea of dismemberment. The towns of Castille showed more enthusiasm for Philip in his disasters, than they had done before his power was in danger. The Allies saw the danger gather and withdrew beyond the Tagus. On October 27 Philip entered Madrid once more amidst a scene of great enthusiasm. A large army gathered almost without any effort on the part of the Government. In April the Spaniards, assisted by French troops and under the direction of Marshal Berwick, attacked the allied troops under Lord Galway at Almanza in New Castille near the frontier of Valencia, and gained an entire victory. It was, for Spain, the decisive battle of the war. Valencia returned to its allegiance in the next month. The leaders of the Allies were convinced of the hopelessness of conquering the heart of Spain, and for the present no further effort was made in that direction. But

they still retained their hold on Catalonia, and strengthened themselves there by the conquest of Port Mahon in September 1708.

If, then, we sum up the situation at the end of 1708, we find it almost everywhere unfavourable to the arms of France. Complete disaster had overtaken them in Italy and on the northern frontier. Some assistance had been hoped for from the Jacobites of England or Scotland; but an expedition of the Pretender to Scotland in 1708 had resulted in entire failure. The victory of Philip in Spain was no real help to France. Her frontiers had been passed at two important points, and, though the attack on Toulon had been successfully met, another and more dangerous attack was anticipated for the next year. Lastly, at the opening of 1709, the elements turned against France, for she was visited by one of the most terrible winters recorded during the century. The frost came suddenly on January 6, and did not relax its hold until March. The sea was reported to be frozen in some places; the Rhone was frozen over; the fruit-trees and vines perished over large districts of France. The loss would have been grievous enough in ordinary years, but with the finances of France strained to breaking, with poverty and bankruptcy everywhere, it fell with an intolerable weight upon the country. The confusion of the finances had grown from year to year. There had been borrowings at ruinous interest, issues of paper money, depreciation of the coinage, until no one could really tell what the financial position of France was. The *traitants* and the *partisans* were as powerful as they had been before the time of Colbert.

Overtures for Peace.

There had been talk of negotiations for some time. In 1706, after the battle of Ramillies, Louis had made serious proposals. He suggested that the Austrian Archduke Charles should take Spain and the Indies, and reign as Charles III. Philip of Anjou was to have Naples, Sicily and Milan. Holland was to take

the Netherlands. But these proposals came to nothing; the Allies hoped shortly to dictate what terms they liked.

In 1709 Louis was forced by the distress of his country to make overtures once more. The minister Torci was sent in disguise to negotiate with Heinsius at the Hague. He made an offer of money to Marlborough in the hope of inducing him to throw his influence on the side of peace; but Marlborough could not be gained. The Allies presented their ultimatum on May 28. Philip was to be entirely abandoned; Louis was to surrender Luxemburg, Namur, Charleroi, Strassburg and many other places. If Philip refused to leave Spain, Louis was to add his forces to those of the Allies and drive him out. If these terms were accepted France was to be allowed a truce. But the truce was not to become a definite peace, unless within a certain period Philip were really driven from Spain. "Shame and loss," as Ranke says, "were certain, and peace was far from certain." Louis would probably have to fight still, but to fight against his own grandson and the interests of France. Even in the depth of his humiliation such terms could not be accepted. The Allies in their own interests should never have insisted on them: it is one of the gravest charges against the Whig Government of the time, that it did not seize this favourable opportunity of making peace.

From the negotiations of 1709 to the beginning of 1710.

France nerved herself then to continue the struggle; but her darkest hour was past. The very wretchedness of the country drove men into the ranks of the army: starvation at least was not to be feared there, while there was any corn to be found in the country. Not only were the ranks full, but the soldiers bore their burdens and fought with a patience that Villars could not praise too highly. The King sent round a circular letter to the provinces, explaining what terms the Allies had offered and his reasons for refusing them. "Though I love my people," he wrote, "as much as I love my own children; though I share in all the evils which the war has

brought upon my faithful subjects; though I have shown how sincerely I desire to give them the blessings of peace; yet I am persuaded that they themselves would refuse the terms which are offered, as contrary to justice and dishonourable to the French name." The appeal was not in vain, and the war was more really a popular struggle at the end than it had been at the beginning. There came too from Spanish America an unexpected supply of gold and silver. France renewed the war with a heavy heart, but with fierce determination.

During the rest of the war no military events of importance occurred on the frontier of the Rhine or the Alps. The course of the war in Spain and in the Netherlands alone claims our attention. But while in these countries the conflict dragged on, thoughts of peace gained more and more upon the combatants; and negotiations, interrupted, indeed, but never out of the minds of diplomatists, at last resulted in the Peace of Utrecht.

The struggle in Spain was almost independent of the main struggle, and events in the Peninsula have only an indirect bearing on the conclusion of the war. They may, therefore, be continuously narrated before we go on to the more important struggle in Flanders.

1. Spain.

The year 1709 saw no military event of even secondary importance in Spain. The Allies still held Catalonia, but Philip V was victoriously supported elsewhere. In 1710 Louis XIV, despairing of victory, and thinking that the continued resistance of his grandson stood in the way of peace, withdrew his troops from Spain and sent Noailles to Madrid to counsel Philip to give up a hopeless struggle. The Allies were therefore emboldened to make a new attack. Lord Stanhope and Stahremberg defeated Philip with much loss at Saragossa (Aug. 1710), and the King again found Madrid indefensible. The Allies entered it for a second time, and, as before, a large proportion of the inhabitants fled as the enemy approached. Philip himself fell back on Valladolid.

But the events of 1706 were repeated. The national spirit rose against the victorious Allies: the presence of so many Protestants among them embittered the Catholic feeling of Spain. The Allies found their position untenable. There were differences of opinion, amounting almost to a quarrel, between Stanhope and Stahremberg. The Spaniards meanwhile were assisted, not indeed by French troops in any large numbers, but by the able guidance of Vendôme. Want of provisions forced Stahremberg and Stanhope to divide their forces. Stanhope's detachment was surrounded and forced to surrender at Brihuega, and Stahremberg was attacked a little later at Villa Viciosa (Dec. 1710). His infantry, English and German, fought well and repulsed the Spaniards, but the Spanish cavalry decided the day. The night alone saved Stahremberg. He struggled on through Aragon into Catalonia, and his army melted as he went. Soon nothing was left to the Allies except the sea-coast of Catalonia. It became doubly clear that nothing short of a combined and concentrated effort of the Allies would suffice to expel Philip from Spain.

2. The Netherlands.

In the Netherlands the French had a much more desperate struggle to carry on. Eugène and Marlborough united their forces and their talents for a great forward movement. Villars, the only unbeaten commander that France possessed, was despatched to hold them in check. If the Dutch had supported them they would have struck more boldly into France. As it was, they determined to add to their numerous conquests of the great Franco-Spanish fortresses. Tournai capitulated to them on June 29, 1709. They then turned against Mons, and a part of their force was already preparing to besiege it, when Villars took up a position near Malplaquet, which made a battle necessary, before Mons could be properly blockaded. His centre occupied the village of Malplaquet and the road to Mons. His right and left were protected by woods. Boufflers, though an older Marshal than himself, had joined him, and

was willing to serve under him, in a spirit that contrasts strongly with the quarrels of other French Marshals, of which we read so much during the war. Villars fortified his position and made it very difficult to attack. But Eugène and Marlborough saw that Villars must be driven off, if Mons was to be taken. The attack was made on Sept. 11, 1709. At first the Allies were repulsed with very heavy losses. But Villars was severely wounded in the knee, and, though at first he insisted on superintending the struggle from his chair, he soon fainted and was carried off the field. The attack on the French left forced Boufflers, who succeeded to Villars' command, to weaken the centre, and it was there that the Allies at last, after prodigious slaughter, broke through, and thus forced the enemy to retreat. They gained nothing but the field of battle. Boufflers drew off his army in good order. It was calculated that the Allies had employed 120,000 men and the French 90,000. The Allies had lost nearly 20,000; the French not more than 9,000. Mons fell; but that was all that the Allies gained from this sanguinary battle. The real profit was rather on the side of France, for after so many overwhelming and humiliating defeats, it was something to have avoided a rout, and to have inflicted on the enemy so great a loss. Villars was received in triumph wherever he went, and the King himself thanked him for not having despaired of the commonwealth.

Negotiations for Peace.

Early in the year 1710 the King again humbled himself and asked for peace. The Allies required him to drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs, and to drink it in vain. The Dutch repaid his representatives with interest for all the indignities which they had received from him earlier in his reign, and in the end offered terms which would have compromised the honour of France without giving her assurance of peace. Louis was to expel Philip from Spain unaided by the Allies. A truce of two months was to be granted to him, and "ulterior demands"

were vaguely spoken of which would give the Allies in any case an excuse for reopening the struggle. The conferences, which had been held at Gertruydenberg, came to an end in July, 1710. "If I am to fight," said the King, "I would rather fight against the enemy than against my children." The war had not stopped meanwhile. Douai surrendered to Eugène and Marlborough on June 25; and Béthune soon followed. France had to face a continuance of the war, which seemed as if it could only bring humiliation in the end. Desmarets, who had succeeded Chamillart in the Finances, imposed in Oct. 1710 a tax, modelled on the proposals of Vauban, called the *dixième*, a land tax falling equitably on privileged and unprivileged alike. The tax did not produce as much as it ought to have done, but it gave the State means to exist[1]. The interest on State debts was arbitrarily reduced to 5 per cent., and the armies were ready for 1711 in something like their usual force.

Proposals of Peace from England.

With the first month of 1711 a new hope dawned for France from a quarter where she had found in the past the most stubborn resistance. England proposed to treat of peace. The Foreign Minister Torci tells us in his Memoirs how on Jan. 20, 1711, the Abbé Gauthier, a secret political agent of France in

[1] It will be worth while here briefly to trace the history of this tax, which may profitably be compared with that of the *Capitation* (see p. 94, note). It was suppressed in 1717, re-enacted for the war of the Polish Succession (1733—1737), and again established in 1741 until the end of the war of the Austrian Succession. In 1749 it was abolished, but the *vingtième* that was then enacted was really the *dixième* under another form. It should have fallen in equal proportion on the incomes of all, rich and poor: but even-handed justice, especially in financial matters, must not be looked for in the last century of the monarchy. In Calonne's administration (1783) it was reckoned that the privileged classes had thrown off much more than half of their proper burden. A letter from a gentleman to an intendant is often quoted, as showing the spirit in which this and other taxes were administered. "Your sensitive heart will never allow that a father of my standing should be taxed with the same strict *vingtième* as a father of the common sort."

London, came suddenly to him and asked him whether he wanted peace, for England was now willing to make a separate arrangement. "To ask a Minister of His Majesty at that time," says Torci, "whether he wanted peace, was to ask a man ill of a protracted and grievous malady whether he wanted to be well."

The proposal came very unexpectedly, and the early stages of the negotiations were like the intrigues of a comedy. And yet careful observers of English affairs might have seen for some time that the ascendancy of the Whigs and Marlborough was precarious and unstable. The Queen herself was rather Tory than Whig, and would doubtless have preferred that her half-brother, the Old Pretender, should succeed her, rather than the Elector of Hanover. The masses were at heart Tory, and the circumstances attending the prosecution of Dr Sacheverel had brought this fact to light. The nation moreover was weary of the war, and indignant at the slaughter of Malplaquet. Marlborough's power seemed to many too great for a subject, and some saw in him another Cromwell. And whilst a great change was thus maturing in the nation at large, Queen Anne herself was wearying of the imperious temper of Lady Marlborough, who played so important a part in the war. Macaulay doubtless exaggerates in his picturesque way when he says that, when Lord Marlborough "had contrived vast and profound schemes of policy, he could only carry them into effect, by inducing one foolish woman, who was often unmanageable, to manage another woman who was more foolish still." But certainly, without Lady Marlborough's predominance over the mind of the Queen, her husband's authority would not have been what it was; and when, therefore, Lady Marlborough was dismissed and Mrs Masham, hostile to the Whigs and to Marlborough, took her place, the change was one of great importance, The course of English politics cannot be narrated here. The change came somewhat slowly. Sunderland was dismissed in Aug. 1710. By November

Harley had formed a Tory Ministry; and in Jan. 1711, as we have already seen, the Tories, seeing that it would be to their advantage as a party to put an end to the war, made overtures for a peace. Their object was both righteous and necessary, but they worked for it "rather as conspirators than as statesmen."

In April, 1711, news from Vienna gave yet another reason for concluding a peace. On April 17 the Emperor Joseph I died, and the vast possessions of the Austrian house descended to the Archduke Charles his brother—the candidate of the Allies for the Crown of Spain. Europe had been fighting France to prevent the balance of power from being upset in one direction; but, if Charles united the Spanish, Austrian and Imperial crowns, it would be still more dangerously upset in another. The Empire of Charles V would be revived.

Succession of the Archduke Charles to the Imperial title, 1711.

In these circumstances the negotiations for peace became the chief interest, and the war languished in comparison. Villars noted in the troops of the northern frontier "an indolence and a lassitude that contrasted strangely with their determination and courage in the previous year." Even Marlborough found it impossible to act with vigour owing to the state of politics at home. His capture of Bouchain, Sept. 1711, was the only important military incident of the year in the North. But in the same month Duguay Trouin, with a French squadron, attacked Rio de Janeiro, the Portuguese capital of Brazil, captured it, and held it to ransom. It was an event likely to cool the eagerness of the Portuguese for war. In December all doubt as to the succession of the Empire was set at rest by the coronation of the Emperor Charles at Frankfort. In the same month the new English Parliament came together. The Whig majority had disappeared; the Tories were in power there as well as in the councils of the Queen. The House of Lords was indeed still Whig and eager for the war, but a creation of new Peers altered

the balance in that House, and every official organ of England was now for peace. The Empire saw this change coming over England with dislike, for Charles was not willing to abandon the vast inheritance which he had at one time come so near to possessing. In Jan. 1712 Prince Eugène visited London, to make a last effort for the maintenance of Marlborough's authority and the prosecution of the war. He was received by both Queen and people with every mark of personal respect, but he could not change the course of the political current. Marlborough was shortly afterwards stripped of his command, and this was entrusted to the Duke of Ormond, a Jacobite, who received definite instructions not to take any aggressive action against the French. A secret understanding prevailed between him and Marshal Villars.

End of the War with England.

During all this period of some fourteen months negotiations had proceeded, and some basis of agreement had been discovered between England and France. Philip, it was plain, was not to be expelled from Spain: England was to make territorial acquisitions in the Mediterranean and in the New World: France, on the other hand, was not to be driven to those humiliating terms which she had refused in 1709 and 1710. By July, 1712, the agreement with England had gone so far, that Ormond was ordered to withdraw the English troops from the army of the Netherlands. Only some 12,000 men in all followed him: England had supported the war with her purse and with some very valuable troops, but the greater part of the soldiers were Germans in the pay of England. These now for the most part took service under Eugène, who though deserted by his great ally, determined to continue the war. England, Holland, Prussia, Portugal, and Savoy signed the Peace in April, 1713; but we may follow the course of the war to the end and then examine its results and the terms of settlement.

On July 4 Eugène took the fortress of Quesnoi. He then marched against Landrecies, and began the blockade, having

a fortified camp a little toward the rear at Denain[1]. Villars determined to raise the siege, and with this object attacked Denain. The place was defended by deep trenches, and Villars had brought no fascines to fill them up. "The bodies of those who fall must be our fascines," he said, and in the end the French stormed the camp. Sixty flags and immense stores of war material were taken, and the siege of Landrecies was raised. In September and October Villars captured Douai, Quesnoi, Bouchain. Flanders, which had been so long the chief centre of war, was at last freed from the burden of the struggle. But still the Emperor refused peace, and in 1713 Eugène and Villars were again pitted against one another on the Rhine frontier. But the fortune of war was now constant to France. Landau yielded to the French in June, and then Villars besieged Freiburg. The town surrendered on the last day of October; the citadel stood a siege for three more weeks; but Eugène failed to relieve it, and the garrison fell into the hands of Villars. Then even the stubbornness of the Austrian House was broken. Conferences began at Rastatt between Villars and Eugène, and in March, 1714, peace was made. The great war had died out everywhere but on Spanish soil. There Barcelona had to pay bitterly for the welcome which she had given to Charles and the Allies. Austria had tried in vain to procure terms for her. Philip was assisted by Marshal Berwick.

Battle of Denain.

[1] Louis XIV, in sending Villars to take command of the army of the North, used words which, by their dignity and firmness, enable us to understand the admiration which many of those who stood nearest to him felt for the King. "I give you clear proof of my confidence in you, by once more entrusting my armies and the safety of France into your hands. I know your zeal and the courage of my troops, but still fortune may be unfavourable. If any disaster happens to your army let me know at once. Such a large army cannot be so entirely crushed, as to prevent the greater part of it from rallying on the Somme. I shall join you either at Péronne or Saint Quentin, gather together all the troops that I can, and then either die with you or save the State."

Barcelona resisted with the utmost tenacity; the monks and the priests did their best to help the defence. But on September 11 famine had done its work: the city was taken at the cost of thousands of lives. The liberties of Catalonia were at last crushed out under the heel of Castille.

The Peace of Utrecht.

Changes of a far-reaching nature were introduced into the polity of Europe by the Peace of Utrecht and the Peace of Rastatt. Although the Grand Alliance had not succeeded in driving Philip from the throne of Spain, it had attained the object for which it originally went to war. It had broken up the Spanish Monarchy. Spain itself and the colonies of Spain remained in the possession of the grandson of Louis XIV; but on both sides the union of the Crowns of Spain and France was renounced. Such renunciations had been made before, and made in vain. But now the renunciation of Philip took place in the presence of the greatest men of Spain, both in Church and State, and was accepted and registered by the assembled *Cortes*. England had suggested that the renunciation on the side of France should take place before the States General; but Louis was unwilling to call that body together. It was before the Parlement of Paris that the renunciation of the Crown of Spain by the King, the Duke of Berry and the Duke of Orléans was made and registered. It was solemnly declared that the succession to the French Crown should, in case of the failure of direct heirs, pass over Philip to the Duke of Berry, his brother, and next to the Duke of Orléans, his uncle. Henceforth then the powerful House of Orléans would be interested in maintaining the renunciation. At the same time Spain had to consent to considerable diminution of territory. The Netherlands went to Austria, with Milan and Naples. Sicily was added to the territories of Savoy. England obtained Gibraltar and Port Mahon, and by the *Assiento* the right of trading in slaves with the Spanish colonies. Spanish pride was hurt by these concessions,

1. Its results to Spain.

but, except by the loss of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, her real strength was not diminished.

2. France.

France yielded to England far less than at one time seemed probable. But besides the concessions already mentioned with regard to Spain, France consented to dismantle Dunkirk; to recognise the Protestant succession, and to expel the Pretender from France; to cede Newfoundland, Acadia, and the Hudson's Bay territory, and to grant a favourable commercial treaty.

3. Holland.

It was a great gain to Holland that the powerful Austrian House should occupy the Spanish Netherlands and stand between her and a French attack. Condé and Lille were given back to France; but a row of strong fortresses along the northern frontier of France—Furnes, Ypres, Menin, Tournai, Mons, Charleroi, Namur and Ghent—were occupied by Dutch garrisons as a barrier against France, though the civil government was to be in the hands of Austria.

4. Austria.

If we turn to the Emperor we find that he gained something, but far less than he had at one time anticipated, and far less than France had offered in 1709 and 1710. He received Milan, Naples and Sardinia, and thereby gained a strong position in Italy and the Mediterranean. On the Rhine frontier the provisions of the Peace of Ryswick were reaffirmed. Freiburg, Breisach, Kehl were restored to the Empire; but Alsace, with Strassburg and Landau, remained in the hand of France. France gained lastly a great diplomatic victory, by procuring the restoration of the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne to their territories, which had seemed at one time so hopelessly lost to them.

5. Savoy.

Lastly Savoy profited by her change of sides. Her old territory was restored and increased. She received the kingdom of Sicily, and the Duke was henceforward recognised as King.

Such were the general results of the war. If we compare them with what seemed inevitable before and immediately after

the Battle of Malplaquet, they are surprisingly favourable to France. She had risen from the depths of despair to a position, which allowed Torci to say that her concessions were the result of her magnanimity rather than of her weakness. She still seemed to be the first Power in Europe. But her internal condition was far from corresponding to her external success. If she lost little by the peace, she had suffered very heavily from the war. Her prestige was shaken: the belief of the French in the Monarchy was weakened: worst of all the cancer of debt and financial confusion had eaten so deeply, that down to the outbreak of the Revolution it defied all the efforts of her statesmen to remove it. How deeply the prosperity of France had sunk may be seen from one well-authenticated fact. At Colbert's death the indirect taxes brought in 118 million livres, but in 1714 they had fallen to 46 millions.

The last years of Louis XIV.

Through the sudden political change in England and the victories of Villars, there was some return of glory to the Court of Versailles; and banners, captured on the battle-field, were again hung in the churches of Paris. But, if we turn to the King's private life, we find nothing but a terrible series of disasters and a deepening gloom. The Dauphin, who died in April, 1711, had never been a distinct figure in the life of France. He was always overshadowed by his father, and only twice do we see him taking a line of his own, first in protesting against the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and next when he insisted on the acceptance of the will of Charles II. When the Dauphin was gone, the hopes of France were intently fixed on the Duke of Burgundy. We have seen him already as the receptive pupil of Fénelon. His blunders during the campaign of Oudenarde were forgotten, and now men only remembered his sweet and humane disposition; his opposition to the theory of the absolute monarchy, which made him say "that a King is made for his subjects and not the subjects for

the King"; his general readiness to welcome all ideas of reform. If we examine his ideas more closely we find that they all tended towards aristocracy and the authority of the Church; had he lived he might well have proved "a St Louis strayed into the age of Voltaire." Be that as it may, his popularity was great, and his wife, of the House of Savoy, was the gayest and most charming figure in the rather sombre Court of Versailles. But in February, 1712, a mysterious disease, that seems to have been the small-pox, seized the Duchess of Burgundy. The Duke insisted on watching by her bed-side, and was himself seized with the same complaint. The Duchess died on the 12th, and the Duke on the 18th. Long before the mourning for the royal pair was over, their eldest son, the Duke of Brittany, was attacked, and died on March 8. The only remaining son, the Duke of Anjou, two years of age, was also attacked, but escaped, though it was feared with enfeebled health. The calamity of these events was greater, in the opinion of most, than the mere desolation of the Royal Houses. If this child were to die the Crown would fall to the Duke of Berry, who was a son-in-law of the Duke of Orléans and entirely governed by him. Round the Duke of Orléans suspicions of the worst character gathered. He had at one time been charged with a design to supplant Philip on the throne of Spain. His contempt for the creed of the Church was well known; Saint Simon calls it "his detestable heroism of impiety which he affected rather than felt." He dabbled in chemistry, and popular rumour interpreted his researches as necromancy and experiments in poisons. The vices of his private life were known to be abominable, and now rumour charged him with having removed the royal House by poison to make a road for his own ambition. The Duke of Orléans seems really to have had very considerable talents marred by an incurable idleness. However untrue the charges against him may have been, he was at any rate in direct opposition to all the ideas of Louis XIV; and now it seemed

certain that power would come into his hands, for, even if the Duke of Anjou lived, the tradition of France made Orléans regent.

Arrangements for the Regency.

The King determined to avoid such a reversal of all his plans as this would imply. He had always had a very strong affection for his natural children. They had been legitimated and raised to the Peerage, under the titles of Duke of Maine and Count of Toulouse. In 1714 they were declared capable of succeeding to the Crown after the Princes of the blood, and then in May, 1715, they were formally declared Princes of the Blood royal. At length the King, feeling his end approach, made a will, whereby a council of regency was appointed of which Orléans was to be president; but all decisions were to be taken by a majority of votes. Maine and Toulouse, Villeroi, Villars and Tallard are the most important names in the Council of Regency. The Duke of Maine was to have charge of the Royal Household and the education of the King. Louis XIV thought thus to rule the world after his death, as he had ruled it during his life; but his heart misgave him that his will would be disregarded. He became seriously ill in August, 1715. On the 26th he called for his grandchild who was to succeed him, and addressed a few pathetic words to him, which were afterwards written over the bed of the infant prince. "Try," he said, "to keep peace with your neighbours. I have loved war too much. Do not imitate me in that, nor in the great expenses that I have incurred. Relieve the people as much as you can. Try to do all that I have not been able to do."

Louis XIV died on September 1, 1715, and, with his death, a very well-defined period of European history came to an end. The Great Age had passed away. We have endeavoured to show how really great it had been, how valuable were its contributions to the progress of Europe. But it is also very obvious that the reign of Louis XIV had brought with it grievous disasters to France. The chief of these was not the loss of

territory and military prestige, but rather the terrible impoverishment of the country, the ruinous load of debt, the disorganisation of the financial machinery, and the disappearance of all self-government. The situation was doubtless not irremediable; but, as we shall see, it was never remedied until the Revolution. It may be observed finally that not only did the reign of Louis XIV originate or intensify many of the evils that brought about the Revolution, it also contributed to the Revolutionary and Republican resettlement of France on its positive side. The thorough unification of the State allowed the idea of the Commonwealth or Republic to emerge far more easily than it could have done if the Nobles and the Clergy had still retained separate political privileges, and the Provinces had still possessed something of their old independence in government; and their local ideas, customs and ambitions. If we compare the condition of England with that of France during the eighteenth century, we see that it was no accident that the great experiment in republican government was made not on English but on French soil.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REGENCY AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF FLEURY.

The establishment of the Regency.

THE attempt of Louis XIV to rule France from his grave did not succeed any better than that of his predecessor. France was weary of him and of his ideas, and the failure of France in the last great war was a serious blow to his system of government. The breath was hardly out of his body before all his plans were overthrown. The contents of the will were guessed at, and the Duke of Orléans was prepared to resist. Some advised him to call the States General and base his opposition on their support; but he preferred the more traditional agency of the Parlement of Paris. The will was read in a meeting of this body on September 2, 1715. The Duke of Orléans at once lodged his protest: the will conflicted (he said) with the traditions of France, and moreover was in such direct opposition to the King's promises to himself that it was obviously signed when the King's faculties had begun to give way. The Parlement unanimously supported him. The very fact that he brought the matter before them was flattering to them, and moreover he gave a promise that the right of the Parlement to protest against and discuss legislation should be restored to it. The plan of a Council of Regency was at once swept on one side; the Duke was declared a Regent with the traditional

powers. Nor did Louis XIV's wishes find much stronger support elsewhere. The Nobles supported the Duke of Orléans out of hatred for the late King's illegitimate sons, whom Louis had so violently thrust into the line of succession; the army welcomed the substitution of a ruler known to be courageous and skilful for the cowardly and incompetent Duke of Maine; the people at large welcomed any opposition to a *régime* that had placed such heavy burdens upon them.

The Reaction.

Thus the Duke of Orléans became Regent, and quickly all the peculiar features of Louis XIV's rule disappeared and gave place to their opposites. We have seen how the right of Parlement to discuss legislation was admitted, and though, subsequently, that right was closely limited, it was not actually taken away. The whole policy of the Regent showed a decided reaction from that of the last Monarch. Under Louis XIV everything had been closely centralised; his ministers were chosen from any rank in society rather than the highest, and were kept in complete subordination to the Crown. The Duke of Burgundy had already made himself the mouthpiece of other ideas more favourable to aristocratic pretensions, and these ideas were now followed in action. The old system of Ministers was abolished, and their place was taken by small councils. There were six of these councils, dealing respectively with foreign affairs, war, the finances, the navy, home affairs and religion. Their members were not all drawn from the highest ranks of the aristocracy; but Saint Simon, the fanatical champion of the rights of the Nobles, welcomed them as providing an entrance for that class into public affairs. "My design was," he says in his Memoirs, "to make a beginning of introducing the nobility into the ministry, with their proper dignity and authority....So that little by little the lawyers and the bourgeoisie might be excluded from the administration, which would thus be wholly in the hands of the nobility." Nominally these councils were to prepare business for the final decision of the Regent, but

there could be little doubt that they would be nearly supreme in their own departments. A further blow was given to the system of the centralised despotism by an enquiry into the method of imprisonment by royal warrant (*lettres de cachet*); and a great many victims of Louis XIV's government were placed at liberty. It is worth noting, as evidence of the lengths to which the *ancien régime* could go, that there was found in the prison of the Bastille an Italian who had been there for thirty-five years. No charge against him could be found; he professed himself ignorant of the cause of his detention, and it seemed probable that he was the victim of a mistake. Nor was the reaction in religious matters less complete. The new government sympathised with the Jansenists because Louis XIV's government had persecuted them. Cardinal de Noailles, who had been detested by Louis because of his Jansenist leanings, was made President of the Council for religious affairs; and the Jansenists were released from prison in great numbers. But no improvement lightened the sufferings of the persecuted Huguenots. The Jansenists were no more favourable to them than the Jesuits. No relief was destined to come to them till the time of Voltaire and the philosophic movement. As the crown of the whole reaction, Louis' measures on behalf of his illegitimate children were undone. Parlement annulled their legitimation and removed them from all possibility of the succession. Saint Simon had called the original action of the King "a monstrous, astounding and frightful determination," and saw in its undoing the best augury for the coming time. Nor was the contrast between the characters of the Duke of Orléans and Louis XIV less remarkable than the divergence of their policies. In place of the austere decorum of Louis XIV's later years the new Regent paraded his vicious and irregular life. He ate and drank heavily and was pleased that public opinion should suspect him of every vice. He neither had nor professed to have any belief in the Church or its doctrines. He celebrated Good

Friday by a riotous banquet; and the license of his private life was grosser even than that of Louis XIV in his earliest years. With such a character it was natural that the worst construction should be put upon all he did. His genuine and intelligent interest in science was regarded as the pursuit of magic, and he was seriously believed to have tried "to raise the Devil." Profligacy became the condition of public advancement, and the Regent and his boon companions were foremost in all evil practices.

Serious obstacles lay across the path of the regency, and above all there was the financial trouble. The late government had been driven by the expenses of the war into every sort of financial expedient. It had borrowed money at high interest; it had sold offices wholesale; it had established lotteries and debased the coinage. But the only result was that France had to face a huge debt and a yearly deficit, with her hands tied by the results of this frantic policy. The total debt was more than 2,400,000,000 livres. In 1715 the deficit was 78 millions, and in 1716 it rose to 97 millions. The Provinces were restive under these burdens, and there were serious symptoms of revolt in Brittany. Saint Simon could see no possible escape except through a declaration of bankruptcy. The Regent rejected so dishonourable a suggestion, but looked round eagerly for expedients. The usual cry was raised against the financiers. A special tribunal armed with exceptional powers was established to deal with them, and it adopted measures of the most violent and unjust kind. Information was accepted from witnesses, whose names were never divulged to the accused; and the judges, acting on the suggestion of the Government, were careful not to lean to mercy's side. Over four thousand financiers were condemned to refund large sums of money. Their punishment was certainly popular, but the State lost rather than gained; for capitalists were naturally very unwilling to lend money to a Government that repudiated its agreements so readily. The

The financial situation.

interest was arbitrarily reduced and in many instances the State was able to deny its indebtedness altogether. But, in spite of all, the debt of the State was not much decreased nor the revenue increased. The financial outlook was as black as ever.

John Law.

At last the Regent listened to suggestions that had been for some time past urged upon him with great pertinacity and skill. John Law of Lauriston was born in 1671 in Edinburgh, and had hitherto led a life of rather disreputable adventure. In London he had killed a man in a duel, and had fled to the Continent to escape the consequences. Since then he had passed from State to State, and had amassed a large fortune by gambling. But he was no ordinary gambler. From an early date he had watched the financial world with keen interest and real insight. In 1705, when Scotland was depressed and embittered by the failure of the Darien scheme, he had written a work entitled *A Proposal for Supplying the Nation with Money*, which had attracted some attention. He possessed a clear and grandiose theory of economics in which he believed with absolute sincerity; and modern economists are agreed that, while it contained much that was false, it contained also much that was both new and true. He lived just at an age when questions of finance were receiving more attention both in theory and practice than they had ever received before. The Bank of England had only been established twenty-one years, and after some difficulty had proved itself indispensable to the commerce of England. The Banking system of Amsterdam was fully developed and, during Law's residence in that city, the notes of the Bank stood at a slight premium in comparison with the clipped and questionable coinage. The fact had been carefully noted by him and it had influenced his ideas. He had urged his plans upon various European Governments, and had been repulsed by Louis XIV even in his period of greatest financial stress. But the Duke of Orléans was a more receptive listener and better inclined to innovations.

The essential objects of Law's plan were two. First he wished to found a bank that should issue paper money, and he believed that such paper money might be issued to an extent not yet ventured by any bank in Europe: he thought that the paper money in currency might rise as high as ten times the value of the precious metals that were held as security, and that land or any other commodity would serve equally well as a security for the issue of paper money. Behind the first project there was another, more grandiose and dimmer. He held that the State ought in its corporate capacity to turn merchant and trader, gradually extinguishing by its successful rivalry all private ventures until it was the sole trader. With the profits that would then accrue to it the work of the State might be carried on, and the need for taxation would disappear. It is this second project which has procured for Law the defence and the admiration of Socialist writers such as Louis Blanc.

"The System."

The Banking project came first, and was begun on a modest scale and in a sensible way. The Regent listened to Law, and believed that there was much in his schemes that was not chimerical. The sincerity of his proposals seemed proved by the fact that he brought the whole of his private fortune, some £100,000, with him to France and invested it in land. In April 1716, he received permission to open a private Bank in Paris. The new institution corresponded to the commercial wants of the time and was a great success. The notes of the Bank were readily accepted, for they were promises to pay so many crowns of the value of the day on which they were issued; while the current coinage was frequently altered in weight and value. The Regent gave it the support of the State, by ordering that the notes of the Bank should be accepted as payment for taxes. Then it seemed that the profits of the Bank might be made the profits of the State; and that the direct support of the State might make those profits greater. In December 1718 what had hitherto been Law's private Bank

became the Royal Bank, and was supported by the credit of the State.

The Company of the Indies.

Something meanwhile had been done to realise Law's further project. In August 1717 the Company of the West had been established, on the lines of the many commercial companies of Holland and England, for the management of Louisiana and the valley of the Mississippi—a vast and most fertile district recently discovered and annexed by France. The new colony was to be exempt from taxation for 25 years, and the prospects of the company were believed to be of the brightest. Soon it was determined to add further vast responsibilities to the new Company. The East India Company and the China Company, founded in 1664 and 1713 respectively, had hitherto been unprofitable. They were now amalgamated with the Company of the West under the general title of the Company of the Indies. Law was from the first a moving spirit in the new association. In May 1719 it was determined to consolidate the Bank and the Company, and Law was made manager of both. His position was thus one of the utmost importance. The Scotch adventurer had become undoubtedly the chief financial authority in France, and his importance was recognised abroad. He received the freedom of the city of Edinburgh, and overtures for his friendship were made from England. As manager of a Bank whose notes had a forced currency and as general director of the most ambitious company in the world, his sphere of influence was already extensive. But in August 1719 it was still further widened; the Company took over the farming of the taxes in return for an annual payment of 52 million livres, and lent the Government 1200 million livres on their security. The management of the Mint and the monopoly of tobacco were placed in the hands of the Company; and at last in January 1720, Law was made Controller General of Finances. His Protestantism had hitherto stood in the way of any official appointment; but religious

convictions sat lightly on this adventurer and gambler. He was received into the Catholic Church, and his appointment followed immediately. He had shortly before brought forward a proposal for taking over the whole of the National Debt. New shares were issued with each successive step in the business of the Company; and the amount of paper money in circulation was constantly increased.

Although, in July 1719, the Company had declared a handsome dividend of 12 per cent., its shares were not at first unnaturally high. But the reports from Louisiana were favourable, and immense profits were expected from the tobacco monopoly in France. The shares rose rapidly, and soon they were bought merely to sell again; and stock exchange gambling began on a scale hitherto without parallel in Europe. At first only the Parisians were interested, but when reports of the vast fortunes that were being made in Paris penetrated into the Provinces, the provincials began to stream up to the capital, and foreigners even were attracted. How great the concourse was may be gathered from the exaggerations with regard to it: a contemporary estimates the arrivals during the year at a million and a half. Huge fortunes were made, and were exaggerated by report into fabulous sums[1]. House property in Rue Quincampoix, where the offices of the Company were situated, ran up to twenty times its former value. Law was the hero of the hour. Extraordinary expedients were resorted to in order to procure an interview with him: petitioners are said even to have hidden themselves in his bedroom. Shares of the nominal value of 500 livres rose to 20,000 and far beyond.

The fall of "the System."

Law saw that the public confidence was certain to fall. This gambling in shares was a new phenomenon which he had not anticipated. He tried to check it without damaging the credit of the Company and the Bank, and when the shares

[1] See Shield Nicholson's Essay on John Law of Lauriston in *Money and Monetary Problems*, p. 195.

began to decline in value he tried to prevent the movement by a series of violent edicts. Coin was only to be used in small payments, and only a small amount was to be kept in the possession of private persons. The use of diamonds and of gold and silver plate was forbidden: the value of the coinage was frequently changed, in the hope of making people prefer the comparatively stable notes of the Company. But the task was an impossible one. The Parlement of Paris had been hostile throughout, and when it tried to revive the old statute which forbade a foreigner to have anything to do with the management of the finances, its opposition had to be crushed by a Bed of Justice. But when the fortunes of the System began to totter the warnings of the Parlement had their effect. The decline in the value of the shares, which had at first been gradual, soon became alarmingly rapid. In May 1720 an edict was issued autocratically lowering the value of the shares. It was taken as a declaration of the bankruptcy of the Company, and a further decline in the value of the shares was anticipated. In vain Law revoked the edict: public confidence was not restored, and those who had been so eager to procure the paper of the bank were now even more eager to dispose of it. The Bank refused to cash the notes but, in order to relieve distress, promised to redeem those of a certain small face value. But even so the crush round the offices of the Bank was terrible. The advocate Barbier in his journal tells us that on 17 July, 1720, there were 15,000 people in the Rue Vivienne at 3 a.m., and that by 5 a.m. sixteen people had been suffocated in the press. He passed the same street at 2 a.m. on the 19th and found it almost equally full. Law struggled desperately and bravely against the disaster; but the gambling had killed whatever chance of success there had ever been in his system. He had to leave Paris and France, an impoverished man, but still confident in the validity of his ideas. He spent most of the remainder of his life in Italy, and was seen there by Montesquieu shortly before his death. The

brothers Pâris, the defeated rivals of Law, were called to the task of saving whatever could be saved from the *débris* of the system.

The results of this colossal Bubble are hard to analyse. A vast number of individuals had lost much or all. Barbier writes at the beginning of 1721, "This year is a great contrast to the last, for me and for many. I had in January last 60,000 livres in paper money which I might have realised in gold., But I had neither the wit nor the luck to do so, and so all that wealth has come to nothing, and, though I have neither squandered nor gambled, I have to-day no money to provide Christmas-boxes for my servants." There were other consequences that were not altogether disastrous. The "System" had come like a tempest, breaking and clearing the old financial arrangements of the State. For a few months there had been abundance of money in the country. The State had profited by this to reduce the rate of interest on the public debt, and to buy back the patronage of some offices which had hitherto been saleable. But on the whole its credit for financial competence had fallen lower than ever.

Meanwhile the foreign relations of France were undergoing a change as complete as her religious policy. The system of government by Councils had never been really applied to foreign affairs. The chief influence with the Regent in this department had been that of his former tutor, the Abbé Dubois. He had gained the favour of the Regent by a ready compliance in the excesses of his pupil, and his real dexterity and talent allowed him to retain that influence. His character grew no purer as his power increased; but ambition soon took the place of pleasure as the chief incentive to his actions. The influence of Dubois now produced an entirely new political combination in Europe. The Treaty of Utrecht had not introduced any stability into the relations of the European Powers. The King of Spain was known to be anxious to overthrow the settlement that had

Dubois and foreign affairs.

been made, especially that part of it which declared the Duke of Orléans heir to the French throne after the little prince who now reigned as Louis XV. In England too the throne seemed far from stable. George I had succeeded to Queen Anne in spite of the opposition of a very large section of the people of England; his foreign origin and his supposed preference for Hanover gave offence. Scotland especially had shown itself ready to welcome any effort to dethrone him. Thus the Regent in France and the King in England both found their power in some danger; and the resemblance between their situations and their interests naturally suggested the possibility of an alliance between the two countries. Dubois energetically supported the project of an alliance, and, though the proposal could well have been justified on grounds of policy, other motives also had their weight with him, for during nearly the whole of his administration he was in receipt of a pension from England. Dubois had an interview with Lord Stanhope, the English minister, in Holland and with George I in Hanover. In October 1716 an alliance was entered into between England and France. The Regent pledged himself to drive the Pretender from his asylum in Avignon and to destroy the recently commenced works at Mardyck, and in return for these concessions England promised to uphold the Treaty of Utrecht "in what concerned the succession to the Crown of France." Holland, no longer capable of playing an independent part in Europe, consented to join. The compact was signed in Jan. 1717.

In 1718, Austria, alarmed by the designs of Spain, joined the coalition. Friendship with England was probably a wise policy for France to pursue; but the terms of this arrangement showed how low France had fallen in Europe, and it was consequently very unpopular. England appeared as the protector of France or at least of her government, and France bought this protection at a high price. The destruction of the works at Mardyck seemed a bitter humiliation to those who remembered the great days of Louis XIV.

Spain was not prepared to let fall all her plans before the threat that was implied in this alliance. Cardinal Alberoni—a statesman of real power and great energy—presided over her destinies at this moment and dreamed of raising her to the position of a first-rate Power once more. He saw that he would come into collision with the interests of England, France, and Austria; but he hoped to keep George I in check by threatening to assist the Pretender, to overawe the Emperor by inducing the Turks once more to attack the line of the Danube and Vienna, and perhaps even to depose the Regent of France by means of a conspiracy for which materials seemed available. Later he hoped to use Peter the Great and the rising power of Russia to support his schemes. He had no desire for an immediate war; for he recognised that time and peace were necessary to reorganise the finances and the fighting power of Spain. But the European confederates made still further modifications in the Treaty of Utrecht. The Emperor desired to obtain Sicily in exchange for Sardinia by arrangement with the Duke of Savoy; and at the same time it was proposed that the Duchies of Parma and Tuscany, which would soon fall vacant, should be given to a son of the French Regent. Alberoni, seeing how such a change would increase the maritime strength of Austria and create another rival to Spain in the Mediterranean, protested, and supported his protest by an armed descent upon Sicily. On July 1, 1718, twenty-seven Spanish war vessels escorted 33,000 Spanish troops to that island, which fell into their hands almost without a struggle. England at once took action, and on August 11 Admiral Byng attacked and annihilated the Spanish fleet. Alberoni now tried to bring into operation the other means of offence which his diplomacy had been preparing. The Pretender was invited into Spain, and Charles XII was urged to cooperate in an attack on England. But the expedition on behalf of the Pretender failed dismally, and Charles XII

Alberoni and Spain.

was killed in an obscure conflict. Nor did Alberoni's project of conspiracy in France fare any better. The Duke of Maine and the Spanish ambassador Cellamare were to have played the leading parts; but the Duke of Maine had not the requisite courage, and all was revealed to the Regent. In January 1719, Cellamare was dismissed from France, and war was declared against Spain. In April a French army under Berwick crossed the frontier. The war was soon over. Alberoni could not infuse sufficient vigour into Spain to allow her to combat so great a coalition. Fontarabia and Saint Sebastian fell to the French; on the seas the English were undisputed masters. In December 1719 Alberoni was dismissed, and the war ended. He had galvanised Spain into an appearance of life, he said, and upon his departure she fell back, a corpse. Hostilities were definitely closed by the Treaty of London in Feb. 1720, by which Philip joined the alliance against which he had recently been fighting.

Nothing of importance remains in the history of the Regency except to mark the continued advance of Dubois. The attempt to establish an oligarchical or aristocratic government failed; France fell back again into that centralised form of government which alone seemed possible to her. In September 1718 the long-failing system of councils was abandoned, and Dubois was definitely appointed to the Ministry of foreign affairs—a post that he had held in reality for some time. And now, despite the notorious vices of his private life, he began to aspire to ecclesiastical honours. In June 1720 the see of Cambrai—once held by the illustrious Fénelon—was granted to him. He had not indeed taken the proper orders to qualify him for the post, but obsequious bishops were found to pass him through the necessary stages in a single morning and finally to bestow upon him the Episcopal title. He next began a persistent pursuit of the Cardinal's hat. He procured support from all sides. The English Monarch and the Pretender both assisted his claims,

Dubois' personal career.

and bribery, direct and indirect, was put in motion to gain the end. In July 1721 Innocent XIII was induced to take the step, though he felt its ignominy; and the hat was sent. Bishop, Cardinal, Minister of foreign affairs, and actual guide of the whole policy of France—there seemed no further step in the ladder of promotion to climb. But he desired the title as well as the functions of First Minister. It had been formally abolished by Louis XIV, and that abolition had been ratified by the Regent on acquiring the Regency. But the easy temper of the Duke of Orléans and the pertinacity of Dubois made everything possible. On the 22nd of August, 1722, the coveted title became his.

He had good reason to hope that his career of power was just beginning; but his licentious life had undermined his constitution, and a fall from his horse proved fatal. He died on August 10, 1723. He was followed to the grave in four months by his patron the Regent, who was carried off by a long-expected stroke of apoplexy on December 2. The rule of these two men had not been without its advantages to France; but they had robbed the Monarchy of all the awe that had previously surrounded it. It would have needed a very capable ruler to restore its sadly smirched reputation, and the next ruler carried its degradation to a still lower point. The shameless immorality of the French royal circle had seemed at first to win a little popularity; but it contributed in the end to that general undermining of the credit of the throne, which is the most notable feature of the domestic history of France in the eighteenth century.

The Duke of Bourbon and Cardinal Fleury.

Louis XV had nominally come of age in February 1723; but the age for royal maturity had been fixed at thirteen, and there could be no question of his ruling for some time to come. His character had not yet developed itself. He was known to be devoted to hunting; but for all other things he showed only a cold temperament that nothing could excite, and a listlessness

and *ennui* that were to accompany him through life. It was clear then that the deaths of the Regent and Dubois left a vacancy for a new First Minister in fact if not in name. The greatest personal influence over the young King was possessed by his tutor Fleury, the Bishop of Fréjus, a man of blameless life, adroit and conciliatory. If he had cared for the vacant post there can be no doubt that he could have obtained it from his royal pupil, but he preferred to remain in the background, secure that his influence over the King would allow him to remain an important figure in the State and oust any rival who might offend him. He therefore made no attempt to seize the vacant office, and it fell into the hands of the Duke of Bourbon, a great-grandson of the great Condé.

The new First Minister exhibited no sign of real power during his tenure of office, and was chiefly actuated by jealousy of the House of Orléans, which stood one step nearer than his own to the throne. This jealousy played its part in his project for the immediate marriage of the King. If Louis XV died childless, the House of Orléans would succeed. Louis was only in his sixteenth year and had had a very serious illness at the beginning of 1725; but it was determined that he should be married at once. He was already betrothed to a Princess of Spain; but the Princess was only six years of age, and Bourbon required an immediate marriage. He risked therefore the hostility of Spain, repudiated the betrothal, and searched Europe for a match that would better serve his purpose. English, Russian, and Austrian matches were considered, but rejected for various reasons. In the end Bourbon decided upon the daughter of the exiled King of Poland, Stanislas Leczinski, who lived retired, obscure, and almost in poverty in Alsace. But his daughter Maria was of the right age, the marriage would bring no continental embroilments, and Bourbon hoped that the Queen would remember that her elevation was due to him, and would show her gratitude

Marriage of Louis XV.

by supporting his power. In Sept. 1725 Maria Leczinska became the Queen of France. She was seven years older than the King, of a cold and precise temperament, and at no time were the relations between them thoroughly cordial.

Europe was full of diplomatic intrigue. The Emperor Charles VI was already urging upon every European Court the signature of the Pragmatic Sanction, which was to guarantee the Austrian dominions to his daughter Maria Theresa. Spain was eager for a revision of the Treaty of Utrecht and new conquests in Italy. In June 1725 Peter the Great had died and the outlook in Russia was of the most doubtful kind. But two domestic subjects almost monopolised the care of the Duke of Bourbon—the finances and religion.

Pâris Duverney was given the direction of the finances and found them in great embarrassment, to which the greed and lavish expenditure of the Duke of Bourbon and his mistress Madame de Prie had sensibly contributed. Amidst many minor projects one only is of importance. In June 1725 it was determined to impose a tax of two per cent. (*cinquantième*) on all revenues irrespective of privilege. It differed little from the income-tax which had been imposed in 1710; but that had been excused by the necessities of war, and now France was at peace. The nobles and clergy loudly protested against this infringement of their rights. The anger of the clergy was especially bitter: in the end the tax was withdrawn and a voluntary contribution accepted in its place. The abolition of financial privilege proved to be beyond the powers of the absolute Monarchy of France.

Religious measures.

There was no such urgency in the religious situation. Assuredly no flock of over-driven sheep could be less dangerous to the Government than the Protestants were; and yet fresh measures of persecution were undertaken against them. It seems that the first impulse towards increased persecution came from de Tressan, Bishop of Nantes, a pluralist on a huge scale, whose character

may be conjectured from the fact that he had been a boon companion of the Regent and Dubois. He had proposed the sharpening of the edicts against the Protestants during the period of the Regency; but had found no hearing. He was unfortunately more successful with the Duke of Bourbon. Nearly all the edicts of Louis XIV were repeated, and, further, Protestant worship was forbidden even within the walls of a private house on pain of death for the minister, and the galleys or perpetual imprisonment for those present. All *curés* were directed to become spies upon the opinion of their parishioners. Any sick person who refused the last sacraments from the hand of a priest was to have his property confiscated to the State in case of recovery. No marriage was to be allowed except according to Catholic rites, and no children of any other marriage were to be regarded as legitimate. These details are enough to show the character of the edicts; and their strict execution was insisted upon by the Government. It is interesting to remember that Voltaire, the most important enemy of religious persecution that Europe has known, was thirty years of age at this time. That his early manhood was coincident with such measures of persecution as these, accounts for and excuses much of what is exaggerated in the bitterness of his attacks on the clerical power.

The Duke of Bourbon's power only lasted a little over two years. From the first he had felt that Fleury was a dangerous rival. In Dec. 1725 he tried to expel him from the Court, but without success. He renewed the attempt in June of the next year. Fleury was accustomed to sit with the young King when public affairs were being discussed. Bourbon secured the help of the Queen in an attempt to stop this practice. She sent for the King as though for private conversation, so that Fleury did not follow him; and when he came into the Queen's presence Bourbon and Pâris Duverney occupied him with affairs of State. When Fleury realised the manœuvre he withdrew from the Court. But the King's devotion to his old tutor is one of the

few pleasant traits that his career reveals in his character. He implored Fleury to return, and readily consented to dismiss Bourbon as a means to that end. The engineer was thus hoist with his own petard; and Fleury now, at the age of seventy-three, assumed the management of France.

The most earnest wish of the new governor of France was to maintain tranquillity at home and peace abroad. He found in the English Minister Walpole a most valuable assistant in this task; and the relations between the two were for the most part cordial. The general success of his Ministry has been variously estimated. It ended amid storm and disaster to France, and some part of that disaster was due to Fleury's mismanagement. But the latter part of his rule is not the most characteristic. He was seventy-three when he came into power, and he died, still in the highest official position under the Crown, at the age of ninety. If his work is judged by its first years it shows us a policy, repugnant indeed to those who cherished the traditions of Louis XIV, but most useful to France for the recovery of her finances and the development of commerce. In 1727 he completely suppressed the *cinquantième*, and gained the support of the privileged classes in consequence. George I of England died in the same year, and it seemed at first as if the new reign would see Walpole's downfall; but he soon recovered power and again assisted Fleury in giving to Europe the happiness of uneventful annals.

The administration of Fleury.

Between 1726 and 1733 there are only two things that call for notice. First, in September 1729 the dauphin was born and the hopes of the Orléans family cast down; and next, these years were occupied by a never-ceasing struggle over the Jansenist question. The Jansenist party was no longer what it had been in the days of Pascal and Arnauld and La Mère Angelique. It had few relations now with either literature or philosophy; and Cardinal Noailles, now in advanced old age, was the only distinguished

Renewed trouble with the Jansenists.

supporter surviving. But it still showed that tenacity of life that characterizes religious movements; and there were still a good many priests and devout women who cherished the ideas of the Augustinus and "the Moral Reflections on the New Testament," and refused to accept the constitution of the Bull Unigenitus which had been issued in 1713. The dying flames of this religious controversy were revived in 1727 when the Provincial Council of Embrun was induced by Tencin, Archbishop of Embrun, to condemn Jean Soanen, Bishop of Senez, for a pastoral instruction which was supposed to be tainted with Jansenism. The Bishop appealed to the Pope and to a General Council and to Parlement to protect him from an infringement of the laws. Thus the attention of the public was called again to the question. The contemporary journal of Barbier—an excellent authority as to public feeling—assures us that the Jansenist side was still far the most popular; not that people understood the matter in controversy, but because the Jansenists were known to be opposed to the Jesuits, and the Jesuits were bitterly hated. Nowhere was this feeling stronger than in the Parlement of Paris; the appeal of the Jansenist Bishop was therefore readily accepted. There is no need to follow the obscure struggle that ensued. The Sorbonne supported the Council of Embrun against the Parlement; and in 1730 the King, acting of course under the advice of Fleury, tried to end the matter by a Bed of Justice, in which he ordered the Parlement to accept and register the Bull Unigenitus and all other Bulls directed against Jansenism. The Parlement acquiesced for the moment; but opportunities of legal or quasi-legal resistance to the Crown were too few to let this one slip, and soon the subject was before the public again in a different and curious shape. In 1727 a certain Deacon Pâris had died; he had been devoted to Jansenist opinions and had lived a life of ascetic austerity. Shortly after his death miracles began to be reported as happening at his tomb. The matter soon became notorious; miracles of healing were constantly reported;

and soon great crowds flocked to the cemetery of Saint Médard, where all the phenomena, now so well known at Lourdes, were produced on a smaller scale. The miracles were so widely attested that the opponents of the Jansenists—first the Archbishop of Paris and then Pope Clement XII—attributed them to the agency of the Devil. In January 1732 the King attempted to put an end to the scandal by closing the cemetery. A satirical epigram declared that the King gave notice to God to desist from the performance of miracles[1]. The movement still went on, but in forms and places that hardly deserve the attention of history. The miracles that were forbidden in the cemetery were now performed within closed doors: we read of strange and repulsive rites, of a parody of the Crucifixion, and of religious excitement leading to convulsions. To such depths had the movement descended that had once been associated with the names of Pascal, Racine, and Saint Cyran. And in those depths it might have perished if it had not been followed thither by its opponents, who showed that the descendants of Bossuet could sink as low as those who usurped the name of Pascal. Nothing would satisfy the Jesuit faction except the entire extinction of their opponents. Priests were instructed to refuse the last sacraments, unless evidence were produced that the dying man had accepted the Bull Unigenitus. There followed of course appeals to Parlement and public squabbles. The cause of religion could only lose by so repulsive a theological struggle. Barbier notices the change in public opinion. At first men had supported the miracles of Saint Médard by comparing them with the early miracles of the Church; but soon, as belief in the Saint Médard miracles evaporated, scepticism began to extend to all miracles. Voltaire and his companions in arms found weapons provided for themselves by this controversy.

[1] "De par le Roi, défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu."

The question of the Polish Succession.

In 1733 something more important than an exhausted religious controversy claimed Fleury's attention; for the difficult question of the succession to the Polish Crown was opened by the death of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. That unhappy country was already attacked by those evils that later produced its extinction. It possessed a frontier that was very hard to defend; a social system that was the worst and most oppressive in Europe; a nobility that for the most part possessed neither morality nor patriotism; a monarchy that was nominally elective, but really became on each successive vacancy the prize of the strongest faction among the nobles. The question of the successor of Augustus II would in any case have possessed some interest for France; but the importance of the crisis consisted in the fact that Louis XV's father-in-law, Stanislas Leczinski, was a candidate for the vacant throne and was supported by the national feeling: while Augustus, Elector of Saxony, son of the late King of Poland, opposed him, a candidate unwelcome indeed to the nation, but supported by Russia and Austria. Fleury would have liked to avoid war, for all his policy was directed to the maintenance of peace and the recovery of the national finances. But the country, having known no serious war for twenty years, was anxious for military adventure. Louis XV, after some hesitation, decided to support his father-in-law's claims. Such a decision meant war, and France looked round for allies. Chauvelin, the Minister of foreign affairs, was more active here than Fleury. It was through Chauvelin in Oct. 1733 that Sardinia and Spain made common cause with France. They had no desire to help Stanislas to the throne of Poland, but they hoped to gain advantage for themselves in a conflict with Austria.

The war, so far as Poland was concerned, was soon brought to an end and in a fashion ignominious for France. In August Stanislas made his way to Poland, and in September was chosen King by an all but unanimous vote. If France had supported

him vigorously his chances were not hopeless. But her interests were chiefly centred in the other division of the struggle, and Stanislas was left to his own resources. He could find no support that would uphold him against the forces of Russia, and soon fell back on Dantzic, while Warsaw was occupied by Augustus of Saxony, who was proclaimed King of Poland as Augustus III. Even now a French army might enter through Dantzic and give victory to Stanislas. But instead of an army there came from France in May, 1734, a few ships with only fifteen hundred men on board. The Russians had already drawn their lines round Dantzic, and the French force retired to Copenhagen without attempting to force them. But Count Plélo, the French representative at Copenhagen, insisted that honour demanded that the attempt should be made. He accompanied the expedition back to Dantzic, and led a hot attack on the Russian lines. But it was beaten off after heavy fighting, and Plélo was killed. No further effort was made to gain the Polish throne for Stanislas.

The War of the Polish Succession.
(1) The war in Poland.

Elsewhere the war had been more seriously conducted, and it produced permanent and important changes. The aims of the Allies were indeed very different, but they all wished to gain at the expense of Austria, and the common enmity kept them united at first. France wished to round off her eastern frontier by the addition of Lorraine; the King of Sardinia coveted the Austrian possessions in the north of Italy; and Spain hoped to acquire Naples and Sicily. There appeared in the war some of the men who had played a prominent part in Louis XIV's last great struggle. Prince Eugène was still alive but took no part: on the other hand, Villars and Berwick were available for the command of the troops of France. On the side of Austria there was lack of funds and men, of organisation and generalship. This weakness of Austria explains the early victories of France and her allies, and prepares us for the remarkable collapse that Austria

was to show at the beginning of the next great European war.

(2) The war on the Rhine and in Italy.

Immediately on the outbreak of war France had attacked Kehl, an important fortress on the Rhine, and it fell into her hands in October 1733. Philipsburg surrendered also nearly two years afterwards (July 1735). The Duke of Berwick had conducted the siege and had been killed in the trenches a month before the surrender of the place. But after that the war on the eastern frontier languished. More important events took place in Italy. Austria was quite unprepared to hold her own there, and the army of the Allies, led by Villars, gained towns almost without fighting. Villars had taken leave of the Court with a boast after his old manner. "The King," he said, "may count Italy his: I am going to conquer it for him." And, as in the old days, he justified his boasting by his victories. Pavia surrendered in October, Milan in November (1733). At the beginning of the year 1734 the valley of the Po seemed likely to fall into the hands of the Allies; but now Villars was confronted with a double difficulty. The Spaniards had always regarded Naples as their first aim, and now in spite of the protests of the King of Sardinia, though Mantua remained unconquered, they persisted in marching into the south of Italy. In May 1734, Merci, grandson of the famous general of that name, descended from Tyrol with an Austrian army. The Allies were in no position to crush him. Villars and the King of Sardinia quarrelled, and finally Villars retired from the army and died on his road home in his eighty-third year. It seemed that France could find neither statesmen nor generals among the young generation to replace the old. The struggle between Merci and Villars' successors was of an indecisive kind. The King of Sardinia, true to the hereditary trimming policy of the House of Savoy, was negotiating with the enemy; and the campaign therefore was conducted in a hesitating fashion. The chief event

was a complete victory which the French won at Guastalla (Sept. 1734).

Negotiations and Peace of Vienna.

No definite result had been reached on any theatre of the war, and neither side had put forward its full powers. To judge by the precedents of the reign of Louis XIV, the struggle seemed only to be commencing. But Fleury was, as always, anxious for peace: the Polish question was settled; the intervention of England was feared, and the Emperor Charles VI was anxious, above all other objects, to procure the universal acceptance of the Pragmatic Sanction[1]. And thus the war died out before it was well begun. Proposals of peace were made in February 1735. England and Holland offered their mediation. Spain, which had conquered Naples and Sicily without much difficulty, alone protested against proposals which would restore the north of Italy to Austria. But Spain was too weak to stand alone. The preliminary articles were signed at Vienna in October 1735, and were accepted by Spain and Sardinia in 1736. With this the war ended, though the definitive treaty was not signed until November 1738.

The Results of the War of the Polish Succession.

The results of the war were far more important than any incidents in its course. Naples and Sicily with the island of Elba were surrendered to Don Carlos of Spain, with the understanding that they were never to be united to the Crown of Spain. Austria received Parma and Piacenza, and Sardinia certain districts of the Milanese. Charles VI procured the recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction from all the European Powers, and this seemed to him a compensation for the loss of Naples. Further, a complicated negotiation brought Lorraine into the possession of France. Francis, Duke of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, received Tuscany in exchange for Lorraine, which he surrendered; while Stanislas Leczinski abdicated

[1] See below, p. 178.

his claim to the Polish throne and was compensated with the Dukedom of Lorraine and Bar. At his death Lorraine was to be ceded in full sovereignty to France; and it came at once into her effective possession. The possession of the three Bishoprics had indeed already made the independence of Lorraine little more than nominal; but it was a great advantage to France to secure it by systematic military occupation. What Louis XIV with Turenne and Condé had not been able to secure fell thus, almost without any effort, into the hands of the peace-loving Fleury and the weak Louis XV.

If Fleury's career had ended with this great diplomatic success he would surely have been reckoned, not only a well-intentioned minister, but a very successful one. Agricultural France indeed showed little improvement, and twice during Fleury's tenure of office was visited by a serious and destructive famine (1739, 1740). But the commerce of the great harbours was rapidly increasing; Nantes, Marseilles, and Bordeaux were far more wealthy than ever before. The colonial prospects of France both in the West Indies, America, and India were most encouraging. But Fleury lived on to see all this changed. Another and a much greater struggle convulsed Europe; new and terrible combatants entered the arena. Fleury clung to power and reached his ninetieth year still holding authority in France, or, at least, suffering no one else to hold it. But old age or natural timidity prevented him from playing any dominant part either in negotiation or war, and when his death came in 1743 men forgot his good services or his good fortune and credited him only with the disasters that fell on France during the last years of his life. The story of the War of the Austrian Succession can be told without more than an occasional reference to the first minister of the State which for so long had domineered in Europe.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

War between Spain and England.

When the long negotiations for the Treaty of Vienna were at last ended and the Treaty signed in 1738, Fleury hoped for a period of political repose suitable to his character and talents. The year 1738 and most of 1739 passed with singularly few incidents that deserve to be recorded by the historian of France. But with the autumn of 1739 troubles began to show themselves which threatened to involve France in war. France had of late been drifting away from the English alliance, and coming into closer harmony with Spain, drawn by the relationship between the two monarchs and a common jealousy of the advance of the English commercial and maritime power. France therefore was deeply interested in the outbreak of hostilities between England and Spain in October 1739. The causes of this war concern English rather than French history: it is enough here that we should see in it the nearly inevitable outcome of Spain's claim to a monopoly of trade within her vast colonial dominions and the determination of England to admit of no such monopoly. No sooner was the maritime war begun than France became painfully conscious of the decay of her navy, and her weakness for the defence of her own colonial possessions. In obedience to the feeling Fleury built more ships and

despatched squadrons to the Baltic and the Antilles. England in her new bellicose mood saw these preparations with suspicion, and believed them to be intended for the help of Spain. The two nations seemed to be rapidly approaching a war when their maritime rivalry was merged in a yet larger quarrel; for on October 20, 1740, the Emperor Charles VI died, and the whole question of the Austrian succession was opened up.

The question was in its main features a simple one. Charles VI's only issue was a daughter, the celebrated Maria Theresa, who in the year 1740 was twenty-five years of age. The one great effort of the closing years of his life had been to secure to this daughter the inheritance of his Austrian possessions. He saw clearly enough the danger that threatened. The Austrian House had many enemies; its territories would round off those of its neighbours in the most desirable fashion; the succession of a daughter would awaken legal doubts and provoke aggression. But he thought it possible to elude these difficulties by previous arrangement with the European Powers. A document therefore—the famous Pragmatic Sanction—was drawn up, declaring the indivisibility of the Austrian possessions and the right of Maria Theresa to inherit them. Charles VI had subordinated all other objects to securing the acceptance of this agreement by the various Powers, and his apparent success had been great. They had all signed, with the exception of the Elector of Bavaria, himself a rival claimant to the Austrian possessions: and Charles VI died confident that his daughter would come, without serious resistance, to the hereditary possessions of the House of Hapsburg.

The question of the Austrian succession.

His old Minister and Marshal, the Prince Eugène, had warned him that a well-prepared army would be of much more value than the Pragmatic Sanction with all its signatures; and events proved him to have been right. The organisation of the Austrian army had been allowed to decay; the finances were

in hopeless disorder; and the temptation thus given to the cupidity of the great Powers was too strong to be resisted. Not one betrayed any eagerness to help the Austrian Queen, and most found ready excuse for breaking their word.

Frederick the Great.

But one was more unscrupulous or more energetic than the rest. Prussia sprang into the arena in advance of all the others. This state had passed into the hands of Frederick II a few months before the Austrian crisis arrived. Though this prince showed himself subsequently one of the most dangerous opponents of France and, next to England, did most for her humiliation in the Seven Years' War, his advent to power contributed to the spread of her intellectual and philosophic influence through Germany. French was even more familiar to Frederick than his native German tongue. He had imbibed the spirit of the philosophic movement in France and intended to form an Academy in Berlin, which under French guidance was to introduce the new philosophy among his "barbarous" countrymen. He had for some time corresponded with Voltaire and had a great admiration for him. This spread of French influence into Germany under the auspices of the great Frederick is a noteworthy event in French history, and, though its influence was not permanent there, it did much to prepare the way for the subsequent rise of a German National Literature. It stimulated thought, brushed aside old conventionalisms and cleared the ground for a new building. Goethe, though he rebelled against the spirit of French classicalism, was always willing to admit his indebtedness to Voltaire.

Frederick found himself at the head of a small state with a population of less than three millions and with a territory scattered and difficult to defend. But he inherited also from his strange father a treasury well filled, a rigid and effective organisation, and an army of sixty-six thousand men drilled and trained into an effectiveness out of all proportion to its numbers. South-east of Prussia stretched on either side of the Oder the

Austrian province of Silesia. He could find some plausible claim to some part of it; and its strategic importance to Prussia was very great. He knew that Europe as a whole was not going to maintain the Austrian succession, and he had as little scruple about seizing the part of it most useful to himself as doubt about his capacity to do so. He entered Silesia on Dec. 23, 1740, found it totally unprepared to resist, and by the spring of 1741 was master of the whole of it, defeating the Austrians at Molwitz in April.

France and the Austrian House.

Europe was so combustible that this could hardly fail to light the flames of war. It is the action of France that interests us most for the present. Carlyle has asserted in his *Frederick the Great* that France had no direct interest in the war, and that her interference was merely due to ambition. But such a contention can scarcely be maintained seriously. Her eastern frontier and especially the northern part of it was her most vulnerable point. The centuries were full of the story of her conflict with the Austrian House. She could not feel herself therefore outside of a crisis which was certain to alter and might very possibly diminish the power of Austria. France had acceded to the Pragmatic Sanction, with due solemnity, in Nov. 1738; but the phrase had been discovered which could free all the Powers from the bond of their promise. They had sworn, it was discovered, with reservation as to the interests of any third party; and there were plenty of third parties to allege that their interests were sacrificed by the Pragmatic. The situation then was considered in France and elsewhere purely with a view to the interests of the various nations: the Pragmatic Sanction need not be alluded to again.

There was the double question of the Austrian possessions on the one hand and the Imperial title on the other. Charles VI had chiefly desired to procure the first for his daughter, but he had also hoped to secure the second for his daughter's husband, Francis of Tuscany. But neither aim

could now be attained without much difficulty. Fleury, if left to himself, would have liked to maintain peace. But he was in his 87th year and incapable of energetic action, and the chief influence over his mind was that of Belle-Isle, a grandson of Fouquet, the condemned financier of Louis XIV, a man of great resource and audacity, whose talents were highly praised even by Frederick. He represented that the interests of France were wholly opposed to those of Austria, and urged that France should support the claim of Charles-Albert of Bavaria to the imperial Crown, and should assist him in rending Bohemia from Maria Theresa. Thus, he urged, the Empire would be at last separated from the House of Austria, the power of both would be weakened, and French influence in Germany proportionately increased. There was at the time no suspicion that the young conqueror of Silesia would found a power more compact and dangerous than the Austrian House had ever been, and in the end more fatal to France.

An anti-Austrian policy having been determined on, Belle-Isle showed great skill in forming a diplomatic union to support it. France was to enter the war as a supporter of the Bavarian Elector. On May 18, 1741, France, Bavaria and Spain signed an agreement for the support of Charles-Albert in his imperial candidature. Early in June Belle-Isle made an alliance with Frederick and guaranteed to him the possession of Lower Silesia. The King of Sardinia and Augustus III, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, were both brought over to the same side by the prospect of aggrandisement. A vast but ill-cemented alliance rose to combat the claims of Maria Theresa. And what had she to oppose to it? She had hoped for the assistance of Russia, where Elizabeth had just come to the throne (Dec. 1740); but the diplomacy of Prussia and France, seconded by an attack from Sweden, kept Russia neutral. In the end it was from England and Holland alone that Maria Theresa received any support. It was not that

George II was so much more scrupulous than the rest of the Powers of Europe about keeping his promise; colonial jealousy of France and a dislike for his nephew Frederick of Prussia each played their parts in his decision. On Nov. 18, 1740, he declared his intention of maintaining the balance of power. Holland soon followed, though without enthusiasm, in the wake of England. But both allies were distant, and their naval strength, it was thought, would count but little. Most onlookers held Maria Theresa's ruin assured.

The course of the war down to the failure of the French in Bohemia.

We enter upon a war which engaged the energies of nearly every European people, and before its end (for the Seven Years' War is merely a sequel to the War of the Austrian Succession) profoundly altered the balance of power in Europe. France during these two wars was no longer, for military affairs and diplomacy, the great central power that she had been in the days of Louis XIV. Two main issues were fought out in these wars—the first the destiny of Prussia, the second the question of maritime and colonial supremacy. In both contests France played a leading part and in both she was in the end the loser. Not even the War of the Spanish Succession embraced so wide an area as this great struggle. Not only was every considerable European state engaged, but its effects were felt in distant continents and by quite alien races. Before the end the French and English settlers and the Redskins of America, the rival companies and the native Powers of India were drawn into a war whose proclaimed object was the settlement of the fate and fortunes of Maria Theresa. The purpose of this book does not allow us to follow in any detail the destinies of Prussia, nor does the course of the colonial struggles demand so much attention as it would do if we were following the fortunes of Great Britain. It will be enough to examine the course of French arms and French policy, and to mark the important influence which these wars had on the domestic development of the country.

The outlook was indeed black for Maria Theresa, but not so hopeless as it was reckoned by some. The alliance against her lacked every condition of unity and persistence. Hardly any two of the Allies had the same object; and there was no leader, such as Marlborough had once been, to induce them to follow a common plan. France desired to see Germany and the Empire weak; Prussia had no quarrel with Maria Theresa's claims if only she would allow him to retain Silesia; the King of Sardinia and the Monarchy of Spain both joined the coalition in the hope that they might secure the Austrian possessions in Italy as their part of the plunder. France took the diplomatic lead in the alliance, but was incapable of directing its operations with harmony and success. Fleury was approaching his ninetieth year, and showing signs of the decay of old age. He disliked the war and had no desire to see it prosecuted with energy. Louis XV was thirty years of age and might have been expected to control the policy of the war, but a persistent *ennui* that nothing could relieve was already the leading feature of his character, and, except when he was for a moment stirred to energy by one of his mistresses, he took little interest in the European struggle. If Frederick had been really anxious to crush the power of the Austrian House he could perhaps have stamped some portion of his energy on to the alliance; but he cared nothing for the projects of France, and as soon as his own ends were achieved let fall his arms.

The first phase of the war to the death of Fleury.

Help came to Maria Theresa from these sources in the end, but at first disaster followed fast upon disaster. Silesia was already in the hands of Frederick, and in the summer of 1741 France, acting on the advice of Belle-Isle, despatched two armies of 40,000 each into Germany. The first struck into the north and forced George II on September 16, 1741, to sign a treaty promising that Hanover should stand neutral in the coming struggle. The

The French in Bavaria.

second army penetrated South Germany in order to second Charles-Albert's claims to the Imperial title and a portion of the Austrian possessions. It was joined by the Elector, occupied Lintz, a strong place on the Danube, and came within sight of Vienna. The city was unprepared to stand a siege and the consternation was great, and many held that an immediate attack would have been successful. But the place was not attacked. The siege was judged too difficult, and Charles-Albert was especially anxious to add Bohemia to his territories. So he took the title of Archduke of Austria and then moved off towards Bohemia.

Maria Theresa and Hungary.

The relief thus gained was used with great effect by Maria Theresa. She was Queen of Hungary as well as Archduchess of Austria; but the Hungarians had hitherto been rather a source of difficulty than of strength to the Austrian House. Their turbulence had been crushed and their liberties destroyed by Maria Theresa's grandfather; but the country still contained a large warlike population and to them the Queen turned in her distress. She took with her her infant child and made a stirring appeal for their sympathy and support. The outburst of loyalty that followed was not due merely to pity and chivalry; for Maria Theresa restored to the Magyars their old political privileges, and this counted for much in their enthusiastic support. They voted the insurrection of Hungary (Sept. 1741) and the population—Hussars, Pandours, Talpaches, men who had hitherto been counted beyond the pale of European civilization—trooped in their undisciplined thousands to her standards. In September too she had gained another point almost as important. She had ceded Lower Silesia to Frederick and on that condition had secured his neutrality for a time. Under these circumstances the balance of success rapidly changed. The strange Austrian army poured westward and northward, and the Franco-Bavarian army had hardly reached Prague when they were caught up by this quickly moving force. The

position of the French army was alarming, for their communications with France were cut off. Belle-Isle had been called away to Dresden by diplomatic business. The nominal command was in the hands of Charles-Albert of Bavaria, always a weak leader and now disabled by gout, who was beginning to taste some of the bitter consequences of his attempt to dispossess the Hungarian Queen. There served under him, however, an officer destined to a high military renown, Maurice of Saxony, the natural son of Augustus II, King of Poland. He urged the absolute necessity of seizing Prague, and insisted that it was possible to take it by escalade. Charles-Albert resisted this suggestion for some time, but finally acceded, and Prague was attacked at three points on the night of the 25th November. The attack was brilliantly successful. The French had in Prague a very strong place of arms and their prospects were again bright. Charles-Albert had already declared himself King of Bohemia. He now left Prague to attend the diet at Frankfort, where he was duly elected Emperor on January 24, 1742. The command at Prague was left in the hands of Broglie.

But the future of the French force was still a very doubtful one. They were masters of Prague, but the inhabitants were dangerously hostile to them, and the Austrian force held the neighbouring country, and had swept Bavaria clear of the forces of Charles-Albert. Reinforcements might make a great success still possible; but without reinforcements disaster seemed certain; and the French exerted themselves to procure help. In March a force of 25,000 men under Harcourt was despatched, and, though part of his force was diverted to Bavaria, he managed to throw a considerable body of troops into Prague. More important still, Frederick moved again, alarmed by the growing force of Maria Theresa, and defeated the Austrians at Chotusitz, May 1742. But immediately afterwards the Queen opened up negotiations with him and by June preliminaries of peace were arranged. Doubtless the

The French driven from Bavaria.

Queen hated Frederick as she hated no other of her enemies, but repeated disasters had made it clear that the division of her enemies was the first condition of a successful resistance. She consented to cede to him Silesia in full sovereignty, and on these conditions he abandoned his allies. It was soon clear how much this improved the position and prospects of Maria Theresa.

In June Belle-Isle assumed the command at Prague, and when in August the Austrians began to bombard the city they encountered a very stubborn resistance. In August too a large French force under Maillebois, reckoned at 50,000 strong, marched to relieve Belle-Isle. It was joined by a portion of Harcourt's Bavarian army and carried all before it until it reached the Bohemian forest. There it found the passes occupied by the uncouth Hungarian soldiers of the Queen. The relieving army failed to force the passage, and Prague was left to its fate. The French force seemed doomed; but Belle-Isle was determined to avoid an abject surrender. On Dec. 16, 1742, in a season of intense cold, he slipped out of Prague, leaving Chevert with a small garrison behind. He evaded with great dexterity the efforts of the enemy to cut off his retreat, and his soldiers showed fine discipline and endurance amidst the terrible hardships of the march. But the cruel frost thinned his ranks at each bivouac. Twelve hundred men were lost in this fashion in twelve days. He had to leave large numbers behind him at Egra. The Rhine was reached at last on February 5, 1743, but out of about fifty thousand Frenchmen, who had entered Bohemia, not much more than 12,000 returned. With his diminished forces Chevert was unable to prolong the defence of Prague for long; but he threatened to burn the city to the ground unless he was allowed to retire with the honours of war, and the Austrians yielded on that point. By the end of January 1743 the French force had entirely disappeared from Bohemia. The admirable management of the retreat by Belle-Isle threw some glory over a real and severe defeat of the French plans.

In another theatre of the war—the only other that needs notice here—the fortune of France had also been sinking. Sardinia and Spain had supported the French designs in the hope of acquiring the Austrian possessions in the North of Italy. But the King of Sardinia had hardly joined before he found his interests conflicting with those of Spain; for Elisabeth Farnese the Queen of Spain was hoping to gain for her son Philip the possession of the Duchy of Milan with Parma and Piacenza. The King of Sardinia was not likely to support such a scheme, for he looked on the North of Italy as destined to become his. Accordingly, in February 1742, he deserted the alliance that he had hardly joined, drew near to Austria and declared war on Spain. Commanding as he did the passes from France to Italy, his desertion was a serious loss: for, whilst he cut off the land route, the naval supremacy of England made the route by sea difficult and hazardous. Montemar, a Spanish general, had landed in Italy towards the end of the year 1741 with a considerable force, and hoped for the cooperation of Don Carlos of Naples. But the hope was rudely shattered when in Aug. 1742 Commodore Martin appeared off Naples and threatened to bombard the place unless Don Carlos withdrew the troops that he had sent to Montemar. There was resistance at first, but the Commodore, a typical specimen of the English naval officers of the eighteenth century, put his watch on the table of his cabin and demanded a definite answer within the hour. Such logic proved irresistible; and the Neapolitan force was withdrawn. The Spanish force in the North of Italy failed completely.

The War in Italy.

Thus unpleasant news came to Fleury from every side. He still remained in power, but the real government of a great state, which aspired to play a leading part in an universal war, could not really rest with a man who had entered his ninetieth year. Public opinion was already grumbling at his lack of energy and at the weakness of the King in allowing him still

to retain his post. Death came at last in January 1743. He had outlived his popularity even at the Court, and his death was welcomed as likely to give an opening to new men and a more vigorous policy.

The central European war to the Battle of Fontenoy.

There was much speculation as to Fleury's successor. Cardinal Tencin, Marshal Belle-Isle and d'Argenson[1], the Minister of War, were believed to be the most likely occupants of the vacant place. But Louis XV surprised everyone by his decision to have no first Minister and to follow the example of Louis XIV by taking into his own hands the supreme management of affairs. But the bow of Ulysses could not be bent by so weak a hand. Louis XIV had at least possessed great patience and great energy and some real capacity for affairs; his great-grandson had none of these. A quite colourless character with no definite interest in anything except perhaps in hunting—such is the impression we gain of the monarch during his early years. He did not at first allow himself the licence that had become traditional with French Kings; and when later he copied and surpassed the excesses of his predecessors it seemed to close onlookers that it was rather as a relief from *ennui* than from any promptings of passion. Whatever was the cause, he had now begun the career that was to lead him to infamy hardly paralleled even in royal annals; and henceforth one of the chief influences upon his actions, public as well as private, was to be found in the character and ambition of his various mistresses. The place of declared Mistress to the King was now occupied by the Duchess of Chateauroux, the third sister of one family who had occupied the questionable honour, a woman of energy

[1] It may avoid confusion if we notice here that there are two ministers of Louis XV who bear this name. The first was the Marquis René-Louis. He was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from Nov. 1744 to Jan. 1747, and was the author of the famous *Memoirs* and *Journal*. The second, the one alluded to here, was his brother, Count Marc-Pierre, who was Secretary of State for War from 1743 to 1757.

and ambition who infused something of her own spirit into the King. But she did not and could not really make him ruler of France. The only result of his decision to rule was that the Government of France lacked henceforth all unity. Orry had the control of the finances; Amelot was secretary for Foreign Affairs, but was succeeded in the next year by the Marquis d'Argenson; the Count d'Argenson had charge of the War department; Chauvelin was Chancellor. All these managed their departments without much reference to any general policy. The connecting link between them ought to have been supplied by the King, as had been the case in the days of Louis XIV; but Louis XV had neither the talents nor the patience required for such a task. The Marquis d'Argenson has described the anarchy that prevailed. "There is no subordination of one Minister to the other. If they agree it is by accident; the King never brings about their agreement. The smallest department is as independent within its limits as the greatest. Each tries to persuade the King that his glory is promoted by such a system; that the more he avoids the appearance of a first Minister the more marked is his greatness....The fact is it is chaos which reigns."

Battle of Dettingen.

The expulsion of the French from Bohemia augured ill for the coming campaign, and the English were at last able to take a more prominent part in the fighting than had previously been the case. The Dutch, despite their desire for peace, were at last dragged into a war in which they had no direct interest, and promised to furnish 20,000 men to Maria Theresa. In the spring of 1743, the English army with its Hanoverian and Dutch auxiliaries passed along the eastern frontier of France and marched up the Main with the double object of threatening Frankfort, the residence of the Emperor Charles VII, and of joining the Austrian army in Bavaria. The forces were led by Lord Stair, and were subsequently joined by Lord Carteret and the King himself. But the management of the campaign was

throughout very weak, and Noailles, the French Marshal opposed to the Allies, believed in June that he had caught them in a trap from which they could not escape. They were marching along the northern bank of the Main, and he followed them with an excellently equipped army of 55,000 men. The English had occupied Aschaffenburg; but the harassing attacks of Noailles and the want of provisions made their position there untenable, and it was determined to retreat to Hanau. A French force under Grammont, Noailles' nephew, occupied Dettingen, which lay right across the only possible road: Noailles himself occupied Aschaffenburg in their rear and cut off all possibility of retreat: his cannon were posted on the south bank of the river and galled them during their march, and would become especially deadly as they reached the defile of Dettingen. The English army was saved from a huge disaster by the rashness of the Duke of Grammont and the admirable fighting qualities of the English rank and file. Grammont left his strong position where he had been ordered to wait for the English, and hurried forward to attack them. He thus not only encountered the enemy at a disadvantage, but also got his troops between the enemy and his own guns which were posted upon the south side of the river, and which were in consequence put out of action. The English, making the most of the chance thus given them, drove the French in rout across the river, and themselves pushed forward to provisions and reinforcements at Hanau. The battle was rather an escape for the English than a great defeat for France, but it had important consequences. The French army under Broglie was withdrawn from Bavaria, and Noailles himself fell back beyond the Rhine. Germany was thus abandoned to Austria, and the luckless Emperor was glad enough to make a convention of neutrality with Maria Theresa. He had begun the war, said the French, with the determination to be either Caesar or nothing; and now he was both Caesar and nothing.

French measures of defence against a threatened invasion.

The retreat of the French armies from German soil after the Battle of Dettingen emboldened the Allies to plan an attack upon France herself. George II hoped to be more successful in this design than the Duke of Marlborough had been, and Maria Theresa, elated by her successes and taking courage from the quiescence of Frederick since the Treaty of Breslau, put a large force of Hungarian troops at the service of the Allies for the invasion of Alsace and Lorraine. France on her side was unusually active in meeting this danger. The financial needs of the State were met by large loans, and the army of France was, by the energy of d'Argenson and Maurice of Saxony, brought into a higher condition of efficiency. The successes of Frederick II had taught France the importance of strictness of discipline and constant drill; and vigorous efforts were made to introduce both into the army. An invasion of England was planned and all the preparations duly made. The squadron that was to convoy the Pretender and his forces actually put to sea, but, just as a conflict with an English squadron seemed imminent, a severe storm separated the fleets and sank many of the French ships (March 1744). The enterprise was adjourned, but on March 15 war was definitely declared against England, for hitherto France and England had nominally been fighting merely as auxiliaries of the main combatants. French diplomacy meanwhile tried to maintain and add to the existing Allies of France. Above all else, it was desirable to bring Frederick of Prussia into the field again, and it proved possible to do so. He had been quiescent since his definite occupation of Silesia; but he knew that Maria Theresa had not abandoned all hopes of recovering it, and he saw her fortunes mounting with a suspicious eye. In March a league was made at Frankfort between the Emperor Charles VII, France, Prussia, Sweden, Hesse Cassel and the Elector Palatine, with three main objects—to maintain Charles in his Imperial dignity; to free Bavaria from the

Austrian rule; and to guarantee Silesia to Frederick. A plan of the war was drawn up: Frederick promised to fall upon Bohemia: France was to send armies across the Rhine, but her chief effort was to be directed against the Austrian possessions in the Netherlands.

The illness of Louis XV.

Louis XV, with an energy quite unusual to him, prepared to take a prominent part in these schemes. The Prince of Conti was to command the Rhine army, while Noailles and Maurice of Saxony took charge of the two armies that were to enter Flanders. Louis XV prepared to accompany these last, and the Duchess of Chateauroux stimulated, if she did not wholly inspire, his zeal for the war. The King actively surveyed all the preparations for the campaign and at the beginning of May joined the armies in the Low Countries. May and June (1744) saw nothing but French victories. Coutrai fell to France on May 14, Menin and Ypres yielded in June. Maurice of Saxony was created Marshal in recognition of his services. But at the end of June alarming news reached the French camp. A Hungarian army under Charles of Lorraine had crossed the Rhine, and Pandours and Talpaches were ravaging Alsace. Weissenburg and Lauterburg were taken, and the French army had even to abandon Haguenau. It was necessary to suspend the campaign in Flanders, while a portion of the army was despatched to guard the Eastern frontier. Marshal Noailles and the King marched to Metz, and the King arrived there on August 4. The danger of an invasion soon passed. The French army held the intruders in check, and when in September the news came that Frederick had taken Prague and was master of Bohemia, Charles of Lorraine had to be recalled from France. But Louis' residence at Metz was to be notable for something besides the repulse of the invasion. Hardly had he arrived there when he fell ill; the disease rapidly developed and became so dangerous that on August 15 his life was despaired of. Confronted with the prospect of death the King repented

of his past life; it was said of him later that the fear of Hell was the only part of religion that had any reality for him. He summoned the Queen to his side and dismissed the Duchess of Chateauroux. She took her departure amidst popular execrations, and everywhere in France the people offered up prayers for the King's recovery. When he recovered, France in a delirium of loyal enthusiasm bestowed upon him the title of *le bien aimé* and offered up thanksgivings without end. There are few more ironic pages in history than this, when we reflect on what the King was, what he was destined to become, and how his death some thirty years later was received by the nation. His pious mood did not last much longer than his fear of death. On his return to France he was reconciled to his angry mistress, and appeased her wrath by the exile of obnoxious ministers. She died, however, on the 8th December, and in February was succeeded by Madame de Pompadour.

The year 1745 saw still greater successes for the French arms. In April Tournai was invested. The English and Dutch were determined to make an effort to check the progress of the French, and marched up for the relief of Tournai. Maurice of Saxony was in command of the French troops, and their ardour was encouraged by the presence of the King. Without breaking the blockade of Tournai, Maurice prepared to meet the Duke of Cumberland and the English army, and drew up his force in a strong situation at Fontenoy. Few battles have been described more often or more minutely than the one that followed, for, in a sense, it reflected glory upon both victors and vanquished. It was determined to attack the French despite their strong position. On the left Prince Waldeck and the Dutch were decisively repulsed, but on the right the Duke of Cumberland with blundering audacity sent a heavy column of Hanoverians and English against the French position. This column advanced with perfect discipline, though fired upon by a battery

Battle of Fontenoy.

on either side. At first it pushed on steadily, driving back the troops opposed to it with a sustained and well-directed fire. Maurice of Saxony, who through ill health had to be carried in a litter during all the day, saw line after line broken and point after point carried; neither cavalry nor infantry could stay the advance of the enemy. But when the whole French line seemed pierced and the battle lost, Maurice managed to bring up cannon and to place them so as to fire down the length of the advancing column. The column stopped in its advance, and when infantry and cavalry were despatched against it, it turned to retreat. The royal guards and the Irish Brigade were specially distinguished in turning the check into a defeat. The English army drew off, leaving some 12,000 in dead and wounded (11 May, 1745). The Netherlands were left open to the French.

Before this great battle was fought the nominal cause of so much bloodshed had died. Charles of Bavaria's ambition for the Imperial Crown had been gratified, but at a terrible cost. He might indeed call himself the Emperor Charles VII, but he had been driven from Bavaria and was dependent on his allies for his daily expenses. He died in January 1745; and his death, by facilitating the election of Maria Theresa's husband to the Empire, brought Europe nearer to peace.

France was now anxious for repose. Her armies were victorious, but her government had no energy to make use of the victories. Despite Fontenoy, Louis XV would readily have accepted a peace which should have restored all conquests made during the war. But Austria and England were eager for war, though for very different reasons; and the war went on. Before the Allies could collect any new army to resist the French advance, Tournai had fallen (22 May): Ghent was taken by assault at the beginning of June: in July Oudenarde and Ostend both surrendered. In Feb. 1746 Marshal Saxe entered

The war from the Battle of Fontenoy to the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

1. The Conquest of the Austrian Netherlands.

Brussels. Mons, Charleroi, Antwerp, and Namur all fell during the course of the year. All the Austrian forces were required elsewhere: the strong places were decayed and badly garrisoned; the successes of the French were perhaps easily gained. But they were very striking nevertheless, and the enthusiasm in Paris was naturally great. In October 1746 the Allies made another attempt to drive back the French: but at Raucoux, after a battle which showed the same desperate courage and bad generalship that had been exhibited at Fontenoy, the Allies were defeated and the French were left completely masters of the Austrian Netherlands. Louis XV, in the decadence of the Monarchy, had gained a more complete triumph than had ever been granted to Louis XIV when the Monarchy was at its zenith. Another indirect result of the Battle of Fontenoy may here be noted. Charles Edward, "the young Pretender," believed that the English government would be shaken by such a defeat, and accordingly, though the French could give him no assistance, he sailed for Scotland. This is not the place to describe his career —his entry into Edinburgh, his march into England, his overthrow at Culloden (April 1746). If he had succeeded, the gain to France would have been prodigious; but his failure did not materially alter the course of the campaign.

2. In Italy.

During this part of the war the Italian campaign became more important, and the failure of the French arms there served to counterbalance the victories in Flanders. France had made in October 1743 a close alliance with Spain, and Spain's chief interest in the war was in Italy. In the autumn of 1745 the allied armies of the two Bourbon thrones gained very notable successes. The King of Sardinia was crushed at Bassignano, and the victory gave the Allies the Duchy of Milan. Piacenza, Parma, Pavia and Milan fell to the share of Spain, while the French, after a lapse of many years, again occupied Casale. D'Argenson, the French Minister of War, dreamed of expelling the Austrians wholly

from Italy and leaving only three Powers in the Peninsula, viz. the King of Sardinia and the Spanish princes Don Carlos and Don Philip. But such speculations were premature. Austria had given little help to the King of Sardinia, because she was fully occupied with Frederick of Prussia. But repeated defeats had at last taught her the necessity of conciliating Frederick. The Treaty of Dresden (Dec. 1745) guaranteed Silesia to Frederick, and by gaining peace on those terms set the Austrian army free for Italian operations. Early in 1746, 30,000 Austrians came to the help of the King of Sardinia. The tables were at once turned. Asti, Alexandria, Casale, Pavia were taken from the French or Spaniards, and in June the French and their allies under Gages and Maillebois were decisively beaten at Piacenza by the Austrian General Lichtenstein. Meanwhile (July 9) Philip V of Spain died and was succeeded by Ferdinand VI. Italy was no longer tenable by the Allies. Even Genoa was abandoned to the vengeance of the Austrians, who entered it in September. By the end of 1746, the North of Italy was wholly in the power of Austria and the King of Sardinia.

3. The Campaign of 1747.

France entered upon the year 1747 weary of the war and anxious for peace. But the Marquis d'Argenson had made overtures in vain during the autumn of 1746. He was dismissed from office in January 1747, and France determined to conquer peace with the sword. It was determined to attack Holland, and in the spring the French army marched thither. Holland had fallen very rapidly in power and prestige during the course of the eighteenth century. Her navy was decayed; she no longer claimed to rival the maritime power of England; her government, since the abolition of the Stadtholdership, was without close organisation or energy. When she saw the French armies approach, she felt the necessity of some reorganisation of her Government, and the repetition of the revolution of 1672 naturally suggested itself. The republican Government

was abolished, and the hereditary Stadtholdership reestablished in Holland and given to the representative of the House of Orange, William IV. But the conditions were no longer favourable; the Dutch had perhaps lost something of their national unity and military toughness, and the charm no longer worked.

Maurice of Saxony determined to attack Maestricht, holding that it was the key of Holland and that its capture would at once bring peace. The English determined to make an effort for their ancient Allies, and an army under the Duke of Cumberland barred the approach to Maestricht by taking up its station at Lawfeld. The battle that followed was fiercely contested, but it ended in the entire defeat of the English and their Allies (July 1747). They managed indeed to save Maestricht for the time, but in September Bergen-op-Zoom, an extremely important fortress on the coast, succumbed to a French army under Löwendahl, a Danish officer in French pay, who was made a Marshal for his exploit. In the spring of the next year Maestricht itself fell. Holland saw that England was unable to save her from her enemies, and that the conclusion of peace was the only way to preserve the national independence.

Italian events during this year were of little importance, but they had gone on the whole in favour of France. An attempt of the Austrians to penetrate into Provence was repulsed in February. In December (1746) Genoa had rebelled against the Austrians, and a French officer, Boufflers, had been sent to assist the Genoese. In July he succeeded in repelling another Austrian attack, and Genoa remained independent.

4. The war on the seas and in India and America.

Whilst the war proceeded continuously in Europe, hostilities took place more fitfully on the distant theatres of India and America. During the next great struggle—the Seven Years' War—the chief issue between England and France was clearly the question of supremacy in America and India. And towards the end of the War of the Austrian Succession colonial questions

—including Indian under that head—assumed an increasing importance. Defeat or victory turned in the end on the mastery of the seas. There were other causes doubtless which favoured the victory of England, but the question of deepest importance for the issue was the transmission of reinforcements to the distant fields of war. From the first the naval supremacy lay with England. France made indeed no serious effort to dispute it, and hence the naval annals of the war present us with no engagements of more than second-rate importance. What fighting there was went in favour of England. In February 1744 there was an indecisive engagement between divisions of the two navies off Toulon, but in 1746 both Anson and Hawke captured French merchant vessels and dispersed the convoy of war ships close to the French coasts, at Cape Finisterre in May and close to Belle-Isle in October. The French attempted no reprisal, and the English naval power was unchallenged.

Both in America and India the relations between the two countries was such that a peaceful solution was hardly possible. In America France held Canada and Louisiana and was already attempting to join these two vast possessions together by a line of forts on the Mississippi, the Ohio and the Saint Lawrence. Such a policy, if successful, would cut off the thirteen English colonies of the eastern seaboard from the possession and even from the trade of the vast interior. But besides this question, great enough in itself, there was the never-ceasing rivalry and repugnance between the two nations. Even America did not seem large enough for both of them. But the military actions of the years 1745—1748 were of no very great magnitude. By far the most important took place in 1745, about a month after the Battle of Fontenoy. The English colonists of Boston, with some assistance from England, attacked Cape Breton Island, a point of great strategic importance for the control of the Saint Lawrence, found it poorly defended and easily mastered it. Louisburg, the capital, fell into their hands.

They made an attempt to penetrate thence into Canada, but they were driven back by the French governor, La Galissonière.

The tension in India was equally marked. The Peninsula was ripe for a revolution. The Empire of the Moguls had broken up; the native Powers were in very unstable equilibrium, and both by their quarrels and their weakness invited foreign interference. At the beginning of the war the chances and possessions of England and France were not unevenly matched. The French held Pondicherry in the Carnatic and Chandernagor in Bengal, not far from Calcutta; while the English held Bombay, Madras, and Fort William. Both nations traded and negociated through companies; but the French were at this time represented in the East by the more capable officials. Labourdonnais was in command of the naval force and possessed unquestioned energy and ability, while on land Dupleix was displaying his remarkable powers of intrigue. He is credited, by both friend and foe, with having first shown by what means a European race might gain possession of the Peninsula. The secret of his success lay, first, in interference in the quarrels of the native Powers, and, secondly, in the employment of native troops (sepoys) armed and disciplined after the European fashion and officered by Europeans. In July 1746 Labourdonnais attacked Madras and easily captured it. The English garrison, however, surrendered only on the stipulation that it should be given back to them for a ransom of nine million francs. But Dupleix refused to recognise the validity of such a stipulation and determined to occupy Madras as a permanent French possession. Between these two French officials, both very able and both very autocratic, a violent quarrel ensued. Labourdonnais was in the end recalled and cast into the Bastille. In 1748 Admiral Boscawen arrived with an English squadron. He attacked Pondicherry by land and sea, but after forty-eight days of siege he was forced to withdraw, leaving to the French all the

prestige of victory; and prestige was a very important element of success among the native Powers.

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle 1748.

While Pondicherry was being besieged the combatants in Europe had at last concluded peace. Preliminaries had been signed between France, England and Holland at the beginning of the year. Austria held out for some time, reluctant to grant Frederick the possession of Silesia; but she could do nothing without her Allies, and her Allies would fight no more. On October 18, 1748, the terms of the Peace were accepted by all. It was the product chiefly of weariness and exhaustion, and really settled none of the questions out of which the war had sprung. It established the *status quo* of the beginning of the war, with two exceptions. Maria Theresa ceded Silesia to Frederick, and Parma and Piacenza to Don Philip of Spain. All other conquests were restored. The French surrendered Madras and the English Louisburg. The unfortunate House of Stuart was to be expelled from the soil of France, and as the young Pretender refused to go he was arrested on leaving the opera one night and officially deported. After all the French conquests in the Netherlands and Holland, which seemed to promise the long desired extension of the frontier upon the North, it was not in the end advanced at all. This was felt to be a humiliation for French diplomacy and made the Peace very unpopular in Paris. It was not thus, men remembered, that French diplomacy was managed in the days of Louis XIV. A contemporary has noticed how sullen was the reception given to the Peace in Paris. The cries of "*Vive le Roi*" were few, and those not spontaneous. The people were invited to dance, and music was provided; but there was little response: in some places the musicians were even driven off with violence. Caricatures rained upon the King: one was especially noted which represented Maria Theresa flogging Louis XV, who was stripped and bound, while England and Holland looked on, the one crying "Strike hard," the other "He will sell all." To such

unpopularity had the Government sunk after a war that was on the whole creditable to the military strength of France: when the next war came bringing disaster and disgrace, unpopularity deepened into contempt and hatred among a large section of the people of France.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

THESE years of warfare contained many events of domestic importance, which have reference to the movement of public opinion and the growing opposition to the Monarchy. But these will all be postponed for continuous treatment in the next chapter, and for the present we shall follow the military fortunes of France to the end of the next and greater war, only bestowing so much attention on home affairs as is necessary for the right understanding of the military policy of France.

France after the War.

France was, economically, in a flourishing condition during these years of peace. Her commerce very rapidly increased: her colonial possessions were developing and improving, and seemed to afford a prospect of indefinite commercial expansion to the mother country. Machault busily built up a considerable navy which might again be able to dispute the control of the seas with England. "Europe," says Voltaire, "has hardly ever had a more prosperous period than the interval between the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle and 1755. Commerce flourished from St Petersburg to Cadiz; the Fine Arts were everywhere held in honour; the nations corresponded freely with one another. Europe seemed a large family which had quarrelled but were reunited." But no improvement had taken place in the character of the central government, or could

take place while Louis XV sat upon the throne. Whatever sparks of energy had shown themselves in him about the time of Fontenoy had now quite died out; nor did his present mistress, the famous Madame de Pompadour, try to inspire him with any martial energy. There will be another occasion for considering more carefully the character of the Court. Here it is only necessary to note that Madame de Pompadour aspired to exercise considerable influence over the conduct of public affairs and through the listlessness of the King succeeded. The appointments of Ministers and even of military officers were largely influenced by her. The diplomatic change of front when France allied herself with Austria—a change that brought such vast and ruinous consequences to France—was largely due to her influence. It would be unfair to make this woman the scapegoat for all the sins and sufferings of France during the next twelve years. She had some amiable qualities; she gave away money with a free hand, though she was grasping in acquiring it, and she seems to have had some genuine philanthropic instincts and a real interest in literature. But France never knew a more fatal female influence. At a moment of crisis when the country wanted guidance of the most careful and resolute kind, she did much to prevent it from receiving such guidance and to establish in its stead the rule of egotism and caprice.

The relations of England and France during the Peace.

The Austrian War can hardly be said to have ended with the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, though the desire for rest and an opportunity to recruit her energies had caused France to acquiesce in the rather humiliating terms of that Peace. All military operations stopped indeed in Europe from 1748 to 1756; but in India and America they hardly ceased for a month. The great events that happened there will be here treated very briefly. They belong rather to the history of England, which won and became responsible for the government of those territories, than to that of France, whose efforts to acquire a distant

empire failed, after having had at one time a very brilliant prospect of success.

1. India.

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had, as we have seen, applied to India: all conquests had been surrendered by France and England, and direct hostilities ceased. But Dupleix had not abandoned his ambitious projects of establishing France as the commanding power in the Indian peninsula, and the confusion of India allowed him to advance his schemes without any nominal rupture with England. For in cases of disputed succession in the Indian States—and such cases were constantly occurring—he gave the assistance of the French arms to one or other of the claimants at the price of some concession to the French East Indian Company. The English naturally threw their weight into the opposite scale, and thus English and French troops encountered one another in various battle-fields, while England and France were still nominally at peace.

There was about this time a double case of disputed succession in the south of India. The viceroyalty of the Deccan was disputed between Nadir Jang and Muzaffar Jang, the son and the grandson of the late viceroy; and at the same time Chanda Sahib had raised a revolt against Anwar-ud-din in the Carnatic. Dupleix could ask for no better opening. He supported the claims of Muzaffar in the Deccan and of Chanda Sahib in the Carnatic and quickly gained victories in both places. Chanda Sahib defeated and slew his rival (Aug. 1749), became Nabob of the Carnatic, and ceded certain territories to Dupleix in return for his services. With Muzaffar things did not at first go well. Nadir defeated him and procured his submission. But soon after Nadir himself was slain by his officers, who had been influenced by French intrigue, and Muzaffar succeeded to his place without difficulty. In December 1750 Muzaffar made a triumphal entry into Pondicherry, carried in the same litter with Dupleix, who subsequently was allowed a seat on the same throne. The prestige and

power of France seemed to have no European rival in India. Muzaffar granted to the French the control of all the territories south of the Kistna.

But revolution succeeded revolution with startling rapidity. Muzaffar soon met with the same fate as Nadir. His murder, however, did not weaken the influence of the French. A French officer, Bussy, induced the army to accept as viceroy a brother of Muzaffar, and the new occupant of this dangerous throne ceded Orissa to the French in gratitude for Bussy's services. If the French only succeeded in holding what they had obtained there would be no place for England in the Peninsula. The English had hitherto been equally unsuccessful in diplomacy and arms when matched with Dupleix. The only place that still held to their side was Trichinopoly, where Mahomet Ali, the English candidate for the Carnatic, was being besieged by the French and their native allies. If that place fell, Madras alone would be left to the English; and Madras, with all Southern India hostile and organised and directed by France, would become hardly worth retention. It is here that Clive first made a prominent appearance. He induced the governor of Madras to allow him to attack Arcot, an important place with a scanty garrison and weak defence, in the hope that the attack if successful would draw the French away from Trichinopoly. Clive took Arcot without difficulty; and then defended it against the persistent attacks of an enemy possessing an immense superiority in numbers. His success showed the natives that England's power was not to be neglected. Clive procured especially the assistance of a Mahratta force, and soon the south of India saw a hot and no longer unequal struggle between the English and French. Clive, assisted by Lawrence, gained victory after victory. The siege of Trichinopoly was raised and the French force which had besieged it tried in vain to cut its way back to Pondicherry. Deserted by their native allies, the French were forced to surrender.

The position was doubtless a very serious one for France, but India was so fertile in revolutions that there was no need for despair. Dupleix was not at all inclined to despair. He found fresh allies and prepared to offer a vigorous resistance to English plans. Bussy, a very capable officer, had recently been on a distant expedition, but now returned to help Dupleix. Clive on the contrary was invalided home. But the French Government could not follow the turns of the contest in India nor understand its importance. They saw only that the policy of Dupleix was likely to bring them into conflict with England and rob them of the peace which they had so dearly purchased at Aix-la-Chapelle. The English protested against the action of Dupleix and demanded his recall, and Louis XV weakly yielded. A new Governor was sent out, and Dupleix was summoned home (August 1754). In December the terms of a treaty were arranged. All conquests made during the war of the Carnatic were to be abandoned; neither nation was to interfere in the internal affairs in India; Mahomet Ali, whom the English supported, was recognised in the Carnatic. It was the chance of conquering India that the French were abandoning in their desire to maintain peace, and the historians of France are loud in their condemnation of the pusillanimous surrender.

2. America.

The peace which they had bought at such a price in India could not be maintained. The two nations were in conflict in America, and there no compromise was possible. The immense continent might seem indeed to offer a sufficient scope for the expansion of both nations; but their interests conflicted on many points and had already led to war. While France tried to maintain the line of the Mississippi and Ohio against the English colonies and controlled the entrance to the St Lawrence river, the situation was always dangerous. In the war that was coming England had several advantages besides the control of the seas, upon which the struggle mainly turned. For the French population was very much smaller

than that of the thirteen English colonies and less firmly rooted in the soil. Canada had only 90,000 white inhabitants, whilst the population of the thirteen English colonies probably reached 1,200,000. The French colonists were for the most part hunters, trappers and military adventurers, an excellent material for occasional military expeditions, but unequal in endurance and discipline to the farmers, for the most part of Puritan stock, who formed the bulk of the English population. The incapacity of the French for the work of colonizing is indeed much too quickly assumed by English writers, and much may be urged on the other side: but in America the French population had not struck deep root. Religious intolerance had here too done its evil work. The Huguenot exiles had petitioned for leave to settle in the French colonies with freedom of worship, and had met with a refusal. They would have formed an ideal material for colonization, and they passed for the most part on to English territory. One other disadvantage on the side of the French colonists may be noted. They were governed autocratically from France, while the English colonies had varying powers of self-government, which gave to their action a quickness of initiative which was not possible to the French Canadians.

There were two chief questions about which the English and French Governments disputed, and diplomacy was clearly unequal to their solution. Nova Scotia, or Acadia as the French called it, had been ceded to England by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), but its limits had not been determined; and, while the French tried to confine the term to the Peninsula only, English diplomacy tried to give it an extension which would have enclosed all South Canada. Commissions of enquiry were held but without result: the conflict was one of ambition and interest, not of opinion or evidence. The second and more serious question concerned the western frontier of the thirteen colonies. If the French maintained their exclusive claim to the line of the Mississippi and the Ohio the English

colonists would be excluded from a very important opportunity of commerce with the native Indians and also from the vast territories of the west, which were already beginning to attract attention. Immediately after the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle efforts were made to break through the French monopoly. English traders found in the neighbourhood of the Ohio were arrested by the Governor of Canada, and new forts were built at Niagara and Erie to defend the French claims. The English colonists replied by establishing forts of their own. It was in relation to one of these established on the Monongahela, an affluent of the Ohio, that the collision came. In May 1754 a British force under Washington defeated a small French detachment and killed its leader Junonville; and at once more systematic war began. The English Government proposed that certain territories on the Ohio and the St Lawrence should be neutralised; but this was rejected by France, which regarded these territories as her own. The English Government instituted reprisals at sea. Two vessels of the French navy were captured; and three hundred merchant vessels met the same fate within three months, although the two countries were still nominally at peace. About the same time the English despatched General Braddock against Fort Duquesne—one of the French forts on the Ohio (July 1755); but he fell into an ambuscade and was killed, and his force retreated in disorder. The war, which the French Government had done its best to avoid, was clearly at hand. A demand for satisfaction and the surrender of the captured ships was refused by the English Government. English vessels in French ports were therefore seized, and war began (Jan. 1756).

France and the European war.

In Europe meanwhile the instability of the settlement made at Aix-la-Chapelle was becoming plain. Maria Theresa had acquiesced in that arrangement through sheer necessity. Her desire to be revenged on Frederick of Prussia and to recapture Silesia had not changed and would not change. Frederick was well aware

of it and kept his army on a war footing even during the period of peace. By 1755 European diplomacy was occupied in re-establishing old alliances or forming new ones in view of the coming struggle.

What part was France going to take? Her terrible experiences during the next seven years leave us in little doubt as to what would have been her wisest course. Her interest in the war between Prussia and Austria was indirect and secondary: while her colonial possessions and the future of her commerce were at stake in the war with Great Britain. It seems clear now that it would have been wisest to remain outside of the European struggle, or only to defend her eastern frontier, while she devoted all her energies to the development of her navy and the war with Great Britain. But wisdom had little part in the councils of Louis XV. Madame de Pompadour exercised a complete control over his sluggish temperament, and it seemed as though the real government of France passed through her hands rather than those of the King. But in reality Louis XV had not entirely abandoned an active share in the government. Side by side with the official diplomacy of the State he carried on a secret and private diplomacy, unknown to his ministers and even to Madame de Pompadour. This secret diplomacy played an important part in bringing about the changes that shortly followed. Maria Theresa at this time was excellently served by her ministers, Kaunitz and Stahremberg, and they had induced her to make every effort to gain the alliance of her old enemy France. It was known that much turned on Madame de Pompadour; for at the council table the King, to quote the words of d'Argenson, "opened his mouth, said little, and thought not at all." So Madame de Pompadour was carefully approached and was much flattered by the attentions that were paid to her by the Austrian ambassador, Stahremberg. But the momentous revolution in the relations of the European Powers was not merely due to this obscure intrigue. Many circumstances favoured a great change.

The results of the last war had not been satisfactory either to Austria or to France. Louis XV disliked and suspected Frederick, and Madame de Pompadour believed herself to have been insulted by him. Every European Court of importance was the scene of active diplomacy during the years of the Peace, and it seemed certain that some new combination would be made. Nothing was assured except the hostility of England to France, and that of Austria to Prussia. At last after many oscillations, the policy of Kaunitz triumphed at Versailles. This momentous question was not settled by the ordinary instruments of diplomacy, or submitted to the whole of the King's Council. Stahremberg met Bernis, a favourite agent of Madame de Pompadour, at her house, called La Babiole. The proposed alliance was then submitted to four members of the royal Council, among whom Count d'Argenson was not found. The treaty was accepted by them and subsequently ratified by the whole Council, in spite of d'Argenson's protests (1 May 1756). This "Treaty of Versailles," in that part which was made public, was simply a defensive alliance and treaty of friendship. But, even so, it was almost certain to drag France into the thick of the European war: and very soon other stipulations were made which widened its scope, and made a general European war inevitable. Early in 1757 Russia joined the alliance, and in May 1757 a second Treaty of Versailles made arrangements for the partition of Prussia. France undertook to pay Austria a large annual subsidy, and to place an army in the field. All this amounted to the most complete diplomatic revolution that Europe had known for centuries. The policy that had made France great under Henry IV, Richelieu and Louis XIV was abandoned: England was to be the chief gainer by the new departure. Frederick had not been ignorant of the manœuvres of the French and Austrian diplomatists, and, before the Treaty of Versailles was concluded, had himself sought and found fresh allies. If France was to be his enemy, he must be the friend of the enemies of

France. He made overtures to England. The personal feelings of George II and the traditional policy of England were opposed to alliance with Prussia, but all obstacles were overcome. In Jan. 1756 a treaty was signed between England and Prussia. It was in form defensive and pacific; but it soon ripened into a close alliance.

Such were the relations of the great European Powers at the beginning of the war. Holland and Spain remained neutral. No French statesman can be justly blamed because he did not foresee the terrible opening which this system of alliances gave two years later to Pitt. But the negotiations showed too clearly the fatally disorganised condition of the French Government. There was no high motive and no firm guidance. Machault and Count d'Argenson saw clearly a better path, but were unable to persuade Louis XV to follow it. France was entering an arena in which she would have to face two of the most terrible opponents that her history knows—Frederick of Prussia and William Pitt. And at this crisis the chief influence was that of Madame de Pompadour, a woman entirely devoid of talents for statesmanship, whose frivolous and entirely egotistic nature would have prevented her from putting them to any patriotic use, even if she had possessed them.

The war that thus began in 1756 is one of the most momentous in European History, as well as in that of France. It saw the confirmation of Prussia as a first class Power, the establishment of Great Britain as the dominant Power both in India and America, and a humiliation of the arms and diplomacy of France hardly paralleled in her history. The Seven Years' War was not the least among the causes that destroyed the credit and popularity of the old monarchy and precipitated the Revolution.

The Seven Years' War to the end of the year 1757.

The war has a double character, or rather there were two wars that had no necessary connection with one another. In

India and America and on every ocean where English or French merchant vessels were to be found, these two nations struggled for a prize more important than either of them imagined. In Europe at the same time, France and Austria, supported by Russia, Sweden, the Elector of Saxony and most of the German Powers, were in violent conflict with Frederick of Prussia, who could only reckon on the assistance of Great Britain and Hanover. This war required all the efforts of France, and, as most of the German Powers required subsidies, it was a great drain on her resources. She had in consequence little energy or money to spare for the struggle with Great Britain; and the naval war languished after a first brilliant success. The group of Allies to which France belonged seemed to most onlookers far more powerful, at least for European action, than its opponents; but the internal condition of France gave cause for serious disquiet. We shall return to this subject in the next chapter: here a few words will be sufficient. The years of peace had seen little improvement in the financial system of France, and the attempt to find ways and means for the new war produced great discontent. A double *vingtième* was imposed, of which one was to cease three months after the establishment of peace and the other to go on for ten years after that event. Parlement protested strongly against these and other measures. They were denounced "as tending to destroy all magistracy, justice and order, and as subversive of its constitution." In August 1756 it was necessary to enforce registration by a Bed of Justice; but the unrest still continued. The provincial *Parlements* joined in the resistance, and the Parlement of Paris prolonged its opposition to the Crown on other grounds. But the current that seemed running so strongly against Louis XV was turned in his favour by an attempt upon his life. On Jan. 5, 1757, Damiens attempted to stab the King as he was descending the great staircase at Versailles. At first the wound was believed to be serious, and the belief was intensified by the action of

the King, who took to his bed and called for a confessor. The Dauphin, who had always disliked and feared the influence of Madame de Pompadour, thought that the opportunity had come to secure her dismissal, and Machault and d'Argenson, the most patriotic Ministers of the time, cooperated with him to gain that very desirable end. The all-powerful mistress seemed for a time on the eve of her fall. But Damiens had only inflicted a flesh-wound, and as the King's moral scruples had no other basis than fear of punishment they disappeared with the danger. Madame de Pompadour was restored to the fulness of favour, and Machault and the Count d'Argenson, who had offended the all-powerful mistress, were dismissed. Damiens, whose act seems to have been prompted by the King's unpopularity and his own wants acting on a shallow brain, was executed with revolting tortures. He had done the King a great service; for a great revulsion of opinion came and Louis XV was for a moment popular.

The war had already begun, and for nearly two years France was victorious in nearly every arena. The first important incident, so far as France was concerned, had been an attack on Minorca, a place much valued by the English for its command of the Western Mediterranean. A French force had landed on the island in April and had at once begun the siege of Port Mahon. Admiral Byng, who attempted to relieve the place, fought an indecisive engagement with the French on May 21, but the attempt to land reinforcements failed entirely, and Byng withdrew to Gibraltar. On July 28 a daring attack on Port Mahon was successful, and the garrison capitulated. The victory was really a very important one and everywhere produced a great sensation. The Abbé de Bernis proposed to make it the basis of a peace with England, but the proposal ignored the real causes of the war, which was bound to proceed. French victories were soon reported from America, where the French troops under Montcalm made up by their energy for their great

The War in America and India.

inferiority in numbers. The Anglo-American attack on Canada was repulsed, and the frontiers of the English colonies were menaced. Most important of all, in August 1756 Montcalm attacked Fort Oswego with brilliant success. The English garrison of 1600 men was forced to surrender, and 120 guns and a great mass of war material fell into the hands of the victors. If France had seconded Montcalm's efforts with sufficient reinforcements, there would have been no need to despair of a brilliant and permanent success. Other successes followed in the next year. In July 1757 an English attack on Louisburg was beaten off under circumstances not very honourable to the skill or courage of the English squadron, and in August Montcalm took Fort William Henry. In India no important collision between the two nations had taken place as yet; but when, in June 1756, Surajah Dowlah demolished the English settlement in Calcutta and threw the white population into the famous "Black Hole," it was a blow to the prestige of the British which the French might have turned to account.

The campaign in Europe, too, was until the autumn of 1757 favourable to France. It is true that Frederick was successful in his own field of action. The Prussian King began the war by a sudden attack on Saxony (Jan. 1757), justifying this on the ground of the conspiracy which the Elector had entered into against him, and of which he found proofs in the archives of Dresden. He defeated the Austrian relieving force at Lobositz on Oct. 1, 1756, and forced the Saxon army to capitulate at Pirna a little later. The spring of the next year saw still more striking successes. In May 1757 Frederick fought and won the great battle of Prague—the greatest battle that had been fought in Europe since Malplaquet.

Defeat of the Anglo-Hanoverian army.

But, while Frederick was displaying his extraordinary courage and military genius against overwhelming odds, his Anglo-Hanoverian allies had undergone a series of reverses which exposed him to a French attack on his western frontier. Two French armies had

been sent into Germany in 1757. One of 80,000 men, under the command of Marshal d'Estrées accompanied by the best officers in the French service, was to attack the Prussian provinces on the Rhine and the kingdom of Hanover; whilst another of 25,000 under the Prince of Soubise was to strike further south and join hands with the Austrians in their attack on the Prussian King. All went well with the first army, for the Anglo-Hanoverians were wretchedly commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, who would not listen to the advice of Frederick. They attempted to hold the line of the Weser, but in July 1757 they were dislodged and defeated by the French under d'Estrées at Hastenbeck. More successes followed. D'Estrées was replaced by Richelieu. The Duke of Cumberland made no further effort to cover the entrance into Hanover, and the French commander might in all probability have taken Magdeburg and laid Frederick open to a direct attack from the west. But he preferred to gain an assured success over the Duke of Cumberland, who fell back towards the mouth of the Elbe. Hanover, Brunswick, Bremen fell successively into the hands of the French. At last near Stade the Duke of Cumberland found himself in a hopeless position. He might perhaps have been forced to a capitulation; but Richelieu consented to accept a Convention, by which the Duke of Cumberland agreed that the French were to occupy Hanover until a general peace, while the Anglo-Hanoverian army was to promise not to serve again against France and on this condition was to be set free. The Convention of Kloster-Seven required for its validity the consent of the Governments on either side, and this was never given by the English Government. Part of the convention remained therefore without effect; but Hanover was actually in the occupation of the French, and the humiliation of the English arms was apparent to all (8 Sept. 1757).

Frederick's fortunes also had since June undergone a disastrous change. His repeated successes against overwhelming odds had made him over-confident. After the

Battle of Prague he believed himself certain to take the city itself, and advanced against the Austrian relieving force under Daun with complete confidence in the result; but he was entirely defeated and driven back with the beaten remnant of his army into Saxony. At once his enemies sprang upon him from every side. While the Austrian army, elated with victory, pushed on from Bohemia, a Russian army of nearly 80,000 men advanced from the East. The Prussian officer Lehwald tried in vain to arrest them. His attack at Jägerndorf was repulsed and Eastern Prussia was at their mercy. Fifteen thousand Swedes had landed in Pomerania. Lastly the Convention of Kloster-Seven opened the North-Western entrance to Prussia and made it possible for Richelieu to join Soubise. For a moment all seemed lost, even to Frederick himself; but then he turned on his enemies with something more than his usual audacity and with two terrible blows extricated himself at least for a time.

Dangerous situation of Frederick.

The French and allied army under Soubise had reached the forest of Thüringen. Its numbers and the recent successes of the French armies had given it confidence, and the officers were eager to defeat the famous Prussian King. Soubise had under his command 40,000 French soldiers and some 20,000 German allies; when Frederick came against them he could barely muster 25,000 in all. But the discipline of the French troops was exceedingly slack; the changes in the French army had not kept pace with the innovations in equipment and tactics that had been made by Frederick. Soubise boasted constantly of the defeat he was going to inflict on his enemy, yet he had an exaggerated fear of that enemy's powers which constantly paralysed his action. When Frederick first came up with Soubise the latter withdrew into the mountain fastnesses about Eisenach, and Frederick could not attempt to drive him from them. He drew off therefore to defend Berlin from an Austrian invasion, and the French army came out into the more open country about Leipzig.

Battle of Rosbach.

Frederick turned upon them and faced them near Rosbach, not far from Leipzig and still nearer to the famous field of Lützen. The battle that followed showed ridiculous self-confidence, weak discipline, and a most faulty plan of attack on the side of the French and their Allies, and on the side of Frederick something more than his usual promptitude and skill. Soubise and the Prince of Hildburghausen, who shared the command with him, desiring to catch Frederick in a trap, planned a long circuitous march which should take him in flank and rear. But he manœuvred swiftly behind some low-lying hills, and when the French cavalry were hurrying on to secure their prey they suddenly received a terrible flank attack from the Prussian horse under Seidlitz, and were at once shattered and routed. Shortly after the French infantry were assailed by the Prussian artillery in front and by the Prussian infantry in flank. At once all was confusion and panic. The allied army lost some 3,000 killed and 15,000 prisoners, while the loss on the side of Frederick was trifling. But the importance of the battle is not to be estimated by the number of the slain. The shock to the military prestige of France was immense; neither skill nor courage had been exhibited in the battle. French armies had been beaten in the War of the Spanish Succession, but until Rosbach they had not been disgraced. The reception of the news in Paris showed the dangerous temper of the nation: for with the sense of disaster were mingled a sort of admiration for Frederick and bitter mockery of the Government. To Frederick and to Prussia the battle meant salvation from an apparently certain overthrow and brought a great increase in national confidence. It was followed just a month later by the Battle of Leuthen—"the master-piece of Frederick's strategy"—in which the Austrians were decisively beaten. The last six months of the year had seen a surprising revolution in the fortunes of both France and Prussia.

It was not only on the battle-field that the year had been disastrous to France. Political changes in England had

definitely established Pitt in authority, and France was thus confronted with an enemy more dangerous to herself even than Frederick. It does not fall within the scope of this book to trace Pitt's earlier career: it is enough to say that his own ability and the necessity of the nation forced him on the King. He had been in the Ministry before, but it was not until the spring of 1757 that he was firmly fixed in power. It is for the historians of England to analyse his great qualities of head and heart: the historian of France sees only his extraordinary capacity for organising war, his power of breathing courage into a whole nation, the intelligence with which he grasped the issues of the struggle and the methods of attaining success. When France saw at the end of the war her navies destroyed, her commerce ruined and her colonies torn from her, it was chiefly to Pitt that this result was to be ascribed. Upon his arrival in power England shook off all timidity and lethargy and supplied men and money in vast quantities for the realisation of his great schemes. The central idea of all his policy was to subordinate the European to the naval and colonial war; to carry on the former mainly through subsidies; and whilst France was thus occupied in a struggle that taxed all her energies to annihilate her navy and drive her from America and India. The war thus entered in 1758 on a new and for France a much more critical phase. In Europe she played only a secondary part in the gigantic struggle that Frederick was waging with his enemies. Her armies were indeed often as large as those which Louis XIV had employed, but the prestige of the French name had for the time gone. The Indian and American wars meantime seem to have little connection with the European war and will here receive a separate treatment; but there was as a matter of fact a very close relationship between them. Pitt was speaking the simple truth when he said that he was conquering America on the battle-fields of Germany, for France

Pitt comes to power.

The war in its various theatres to the retirement of Pitt.

was employing there, in a contest that concerned her only indirectly, forces and money that might have given a different turn to the vital struggle with England for the mastery of India and America.

The prospects of France in 1758 were not encouraging. Her income for the year was 285 million livres and her expenditure 503 millions. Boulogne was Controller-General, and could think of no better expedient than the establishment of new lotteries to meet the financial difficulty. The King still refused to entrust the government of France to the hands of any one else; and, as a result, no minister of genius could have done much even if there had been a man of genius among the advisers of the King. But France was singularly destitute of military and political talent, and those who held office or command were quite unequal to the struggle with Pitt and Frederick. In Feb. 1758 Belle-Isle was made Minister of War. He tried to restore discipline to the army, and his efforts were not altogether useless. Richelieu was recalled from the Hanoverian army, and his place was taken by Clermont, a nobleman of the House of Condé. Richelieu had amassed great wealth in his inglorious Hanoverian campaigns by a system of plunder, which had earned the detestation of the inhabitants and added materially to the difficulties of the French armies. 1758.

Clermont had to face a much more dangerous opponent than his predecessor. For Pitt, while he poured an annual subsidy of £670,000 into Frederick's exchequer, had asked him to allow Ferdinand of Brunswick, skilled in all the new developments of Prussian tactics, to command the Anglo-Hanoverian army. The difference between his command and that of the Duke of Cumberland was soon apparent. In a very brilliant campaign he pushed Clermont back from the Weser to the Rhine and beyond it; and then, himself crossing the Rhine, attacked him with very inferior forces near Creveld. Ferdi- **Prince Ferdinand in Westphalia and Hanover.**

nand's tactics and audacity resemble strongly the methods of Frederick and achieved an easy victory. Some portion of the Austrian Netherlands was ravaged, and then Ferdinand was recalled eastward by the movements of Soubise, who commanded the French army which cooperated with the Austrians in central Germany. In October, Ferdinand was defeated by Soubise at Lutterberg, but the check was a slight one, and the balance of victory lay decisively with the enemies of France.

During the same year, 1758, France felt the energy of Pitt on her own shores. The English Parliament had voted 60,000 seamen, and France did not venture to dispute the seas against the overwhelming forces of their opponents. But, not content with this, Pitt despatched expeditions against the neighbouring shores of France. In June an English force burnt Saint Servan on the coast of Brittany, and in August, Cherbourg was destroyed. But France had not sunk so low as to look on tamely at these insults to her own coasts. Brittany rose against the invaders, and on September 11 as they were attempting to reembark in the bay of Saint-Cast they were attacked and defeated with heavy loss.

It is not necessary, for the understanding of French history, to follow Frederick's career even in outline. It is enough to say that he had been in great danger, and by great skill had at least succeeded in surviving. He crushed a Russian army at Zorndorf in August, and in November defeated the Austrian general Daun and forced him to raise the siege of Neisse. The part played by France in central Europe grew smaller and smaller as the war went on. But France, or rather the government of France, had not learnt wisdom from disaster. The European war was still first in the thoughts of Louis XV and his Ministers, the colonial war only secondary. At the end of the year (Dec. 30, 1758) another treaty was signed with Austria whereby France promised to keep up an army of 100,000 men in Germany, to subsidise the Swedish army, to procure the

election of Maria Theresa's son as King of the Romans, and never to make peace until Frederick had surrendered Silesia.

The depressing nature of the events of the year seemed to make official changes necessary. Clermont had been succeeded by Contades. The Abbé de Bernis retired from the Ministry of foreign affairs. He had shown some diplomatic talent and now advised peace if peace were possible. His advice was not acceptable, and his place was taken by the Duke of Choiseul, who, as Marquis of Stainville, had been French ambassador at Vienna. He threw himself into the war with great energy and showed great adroitness in his expedients. A greater man could perhaps have done no better for France while Louis XV shared his throne with Madame de Pompadour. In March Boulogne made way for Silhouette in the department of the finances. The new Minister had a great reputation and much was expected of him; but he does not seem to have had sufficient courage or energy to impose those taxes which alone could have saved France. He, like every financier in difficulties for the past hundred years, thought of laying a more equitable share of taxation on the privileged classes; but the proposal met with the strongest opposition from the Parlement of Paris, and in the end Silhouette had to fall back upon mere expedients, in the discovery of which he showed a good deal of dexterity. In Oct. 1759 a partial bankruptcy was declared by the suspension of certain State payments. 1759.

It is in this year that the fortunes of France sank to their lowest point and the English arms achieved success after success with bewildering rapidity. Those that concern India and America will be found on a later page. We are here concerned only with European affairs.

In Hanover things went well for France during the first part of the year. The two French armies under Contades and Soubise joined to oppose Ferdinand of Brunswick, who was rather sharply beaten at Bergen on the Nidda by Broglie,

acting under Contades (Ap. 1759). It was the first success that France had gained in Europe since the Convention of Kloster-Seven, and Broglie was hailed as a new Turenne and given the title of Marshal. But there was nothing decisive in the blow, and the Duke of Brunswick fell back before them towards the mouth of the Elbe watching for his opportunity. It came shortly after the French had occupied Minden. Ferdinand's forces were as usual smaller than those of the enemy, but the skill of his arrangements and the stubborn valour of the English and Hanoverian regiments gained the day for him. The French loss was very considerable, and would have been much greater but for the failure of Lord Sackville to obey the orders that were sent to him. The French had to abandon the whole of Westphalia.

Choiseul had planned for the year 1759 a descent upon the coast of England. It was, in view of the maritime superiority of England, an almost desperate project; but the condition of France was desperate and no ordinary procedure seemed likely to avail. Transports were prepared at Brest and at Rochefort. The English Government knew of the plan, and Rodney and Hawke were constantly on the watch to prevent it. The French navy was deficient, not only in numbers but also in loyalty and devotion, and the project led up to a great naval disaster. In August La Clue tried to bring up the Mediterranean fleet from Toulon, but at Lagos he was caught by Admiral Boscawen. Half of his fleet escaped: but of the seven ships which actually engaged in the battle most fell into the hands of the English. The design of invading England was not abandoned, and in November Conflans took advantage of Hawke's temporary absence to slip out of Brest. But Hawke pursued him, and he fell back upon Quiberon bay and the Morbihan sea, in the vain hope that his antagonist would not dare to follow him into dangerous and unknown waters. What followed was an engagement between individual ships rather than a regular naval battle. Conflans himself managed to

make good his escape, and was lampooned after the fashion of the time in Paris and almost openly accused of cowardice by the Government. During the fight two ships were taken and two sunk, but the chief loss was incurred after the battle, for six French ships in their eagerness to escape had run up the Vilaine into shallow water and could never be floated off again. If the naval supremacy of England had been assured before this battle it was doubly secure now. The French made no further attempt to hold the seas against the English, though the successes of their privateers continued to the end of the war to show that French sailors lacked neither skill nor courage. Chief of these privateers was Thurot, who for a long period was the terror of English merchantmen. In Feb. 1760 he even ventured an attack on Ireland; Carrickfergus was taken and French prisoners confined there were set at liberty; but then Thurot was caught by a larger squadron and defeated and slain.

The year 1759 had been a very terrible one for Frederick. In August he was defeated with overwhelming loss at Kunersdorf by the Russians. For a time all seemed lost and even Frederick despaired. That he survived was due as much to the slackness with which the Russians followed up their victory as to his own energy.

On the side of France the war languished during the following years. France bowed to the storm of her disasters. Peace was unprocurable, and all she could do was to restrict as far as possible her military responsibilities and stand chiefly on the defensive. News of disaster came from India and America, but there is little to record of the French arms in Europe during 1760. It was something that during this year her armies were in the field on the Rhine frontier and met with no disaster: in October they repulsed Ferdinand from Kampen with considerable loss. The events beyond the Rhine frontier in 1761 were still less worthy of note. There were rumours of peace negotiations and these

1760, 1761.

may have slackened the zeal of the combatants. But Ferdinand maintained the advantage and defeated Soubise and Broglie at Fillinghausen on the Lippe. Fighting with 70,000 men against 140,000 of the French he inflicted on them a loss of six thousand men and forced them to a panic-stricken retreat. Napoleon wrote of this campaign, "It was the ideal of folly and feebleness. The French soldier was at least as good as the soldier opposed to him: the cavalry was good, well-mounted and well-disciplined; the artillery was excellent; the engineers were the best in Europe, and the infantry far from bad. The whole army was composed of Frenchmen, humiliated with the result of the preceding campaigns and anxious to restore the glory of their flag; but the officers, from the highest to the lowest, exhibited the most entire incapacity[1]." In the West England struck at France with energy and success. An English force landed in the island of Belle-Isle, off the coast of Brittany, in April 1761. The importance of the island was well known, but its fortifications were dilapidated; all but the citadel fell at once into the hands of the English, and that was forced to surrender on June 7 despite the gallant resistance of Saint Croix. To see the English once more in occupation of French soil was the last step in the humiliation of France. It gave an impetus to the negotiations which had already been opened with England. But before we touch on those negotiations and the reason why they were abandoned it is necessary to follow the fortunes of the French arms in Canada and India.

The loss of Canada.

The issue of these distant wars was really decided in Europe; for all or nearly all turned on the control of the seas. From the beginning the superiority of England on this element was recognised; and when in 1759 Choiseul challenged it the result, as we have seen, was a further humiliation for France at Lagos and Quiberon bay. Reinforcements for India and

[1] I owe this quotation to Lavallée, vol. III. p. 521.

America therefore, even if France had been able to spare them from the European contest, could only be sent at great risk; and as a matter of fact they were sent very rarely and in small numbers. In 1758 troops were despatched for the relief of Montcalm in Canada, but they were beaten back by Admiral Hawke. All that Quebec got from the mother country was fifty corn ships, which managed to slip past the English fleet that constantly watched the Gulf of St Lawrence. Under such circumstances Montcalm's energy and the devotion of the French settlers could only delay and not prevent the victory of the English.

The successes of the English began in 1758. General Abercromby was indeed driven off from Fort Ticonderoga on July 8, but at the end of the month this was counterbalanced by a great English victory. Admiral Boscawen attacked Louisberg in June with 24 vessels of the line and 18 frigates, carrying 6000 troops. The defence was long and heroic, but the disparity of resources was too great. The town and the whole of Cape Breton fell into the hands of the English, and, valuable as the acquisition was in itself, it was doubly valuable as commanding the entrance to the St Lawrence. The next year, 1759, saw a carefully planned attack on Canada. Twenty ships of the line and many light vessels carried General Wolfe and 10,000 regular troops to the attack of Quebec. A second force of 12,000 under General Amherst was to make its way by Lake Champlain to the St Lawrence. A third was to capture Fort Niagara and strike for Montreal. A fourth was to drive the French from Lake Ontario. Against this overwhelming force Montcalm could oppose only 5000 regular troops and the Canadian militia. France fell, but not ingloriously. Montcalm appealed in vain for reinforcements: he was definitely told in February that none could be sent. But still he refused to despair. The forts to the south of the St Lawrence were occupied by the overwhelming forces of the English; but Quebec made a long and gallant resistance. Wolfe opened

the attack in June only to be repulsed in July. But Montcalm was fighting against a worthy antagonist. Driven off at the easiest point for attack Wolfe turned his attention to the most difficult. On September 13 the English force scaled the heights of Abraham, and in the battle that followed, though both Montcalm and Wolfe were killed, the victory rested with the English. The city itself might perhaps have held out longer, but all heart had been taken from the defence by the death of Montcalm. Quebec surrendered on the 18th September. Montreal, where the Comte de Vaudreuil commanded, alone remained. De Levis, one of his officers, made in April 1760 a desperate attempt to recapture Quebec; but it failed, and soon Montreal was threatened. It was weakly defended and fell to General Amherst in September 1760. The high hopes of France for a great colonial Empire in America were thus wholly extinguished. It was clear that henceforth English was to be the dominant language in the northern continent; and that the government would lie entirely in the hands of England or her children.

India.

A doom as complete fell upon the French power in India. The conditions here were different. The numerical superiority of the English was not so marked, nor was numerical superiority so decisive of the issue while the diplomacy of the two countries disputed for the support of the natives. The French Government is undoubtedly to be blamed for blindness and lack of energy in supporting Dupleix during the early stages of the war; but it is the energetic blundering of the French agent Lally, Baron Tollendal, which is most to be blamed for the failure at last.

The year 1758 was on the whole favourable to France in India. France was in many ways well served both by sea and land. The French navy under d'Aché was well handled and for some time succeeded in avoiding defeat. Lally, who commanded the land forces, had distinguished himself at the head of the Irish brigade in the Battle of Fontenoy, and afterwards

had followed the fortunes of the Young Pretender until they suffered shipwreck in the Battle of Culloden. He wanted neither courage nor enterprise, but unfortunately he lacked all knowledge of and sympathy with the natives. He forced them into the service and often into the menial service of the French troops without respect to rank or caste, and the bitter hatred he aroused had a good deal to do with his subsequent failure. His temper too was so violent that his relations with his French officers were soon very much strained. He had in fact none of the characteristics of Dupleix except his hostility to the English, but that he had in full measure: "My policy," he said, "can be summed up in a few words: no English must be left in the Peninsula."

In March d'Aché fought against Admiral Pocock an indecisive battle; but for the English it was a loss of prestige not to conquer on the seas. Lally meanwhile forced the natives into his ranks and marched against Fort Saint-David, which surrendered in June, and was followed by Devicotah. In December Lally undertook the siege of Madras, and at first success seemed possible. But he ill-treated the natives, bullied the French officers, and was everywhere served unwillingly. D'Aché, after fighting another indecisive engagement with Pocock, had retired to Mauritius. In February the English Admiral appeared before Madras, and Lally had to raise the siege.

After this the fortune of war turned decisively in favour of the English. French prestige had rapidly declined. The Deccan supported the English. Lally showered charges of corruption and treason all round and quarrelled with his best officer, Bussy. D'Aché fought a third indecisive engagement with Pocock, and then retired once more to the Mauritius. The English at the same time received considerable reinforcements and held complete control of the Indian Ocean. In January 1760 Lally still attempted to hold the Carnatic and came into collision with Sir Eyre Coote at Wandewash. The French were entirely beaten, and soon Sir Eyre Coote

undertook the siege of Pondicherry. If the French fleet did not come to its relief its fate was certain, and d'Aché, when on the point of sailing, was ordered to stay at Mauritius to defend that island against the English. Lally defended the place with great stubbornness, for he never lacked courage, but in the end famine produced the inevitable result. Pondicherry capitulated in Jan. 1761, and with its capitulation the French flag disappeared from India. Lally was taken as a prisoner to England, but hearing that charges were being made against him in France with reference to the loss of India, he procured permission to return and meet his accusers. He was tried before the Parlement of Paris, found guilty and executed. The whole trial was one of the most scandalous travesties of justice seen in the reign of Louis XV, which saw so many. Until the beginning of the trial he was kept in ignorance of the charges brought against him; he was neither allowed to employ counsel nor time to prepare his own defence; and finally the execution was carried out with special circumstances of barbarity before the time that had been fixed for it (1766). Twelve years later Voltaire joined with Lally's son in a noble and successful attempt to clear his memory from the odious charges brought against him, and succeeded in getting the record of the sentence cancelled.

The Family Compact and the end of the War.

In the spring of 1761 France had addressed to both England and Austria proposals for a congress to decide on the terms of peace. The *status quo* was to be taken as the basis for the peace, and in 1761 that was sufficiently favourable to England to satisfy even Pitt. But when the French ambassador presented, in July, the proposals of France it was found that they contained certain articles that referred to Spain. The proceeding was a strange one. Spain was at peace with England, and yet she used a Power with which England was at war for the presentation of her nominally peaceful demands. Even without secret information Pitt might have suspected that something lay behind

such a procedure. He resisted the demands of the French; insisted that French and Spanish questions should be kept quite separate, and, as Choiseul did not frankly accept this view, he broke off negotiations (August 1761).

Pitt's suspicions were well-founded. Choiseul had succeeded in drawing Spain into alliance with France. Charles III, who had come to the Spanish throne in 1759, saw the rapid growth of the maritime strength of England with dislike and fear; and early in 1761, when the fortunes of France were at their lowest, he proposed an alliance between Spain and France against England as the common enemy of both. Choiseul suggested the renewal of the Family Compact of 1733, and this was signed in August. The Kings of France and Spain guaranteed to one another the integrity of their territories, and extended the same guarantee to the King of Sicily and the Duke of Parma, both princes of the House of Bourbon. Each was to put at the disposal of the other in case of necessity both land and sea forces. Spain promised to declare war against Great Britain if peace were not concluded before May 1762.

The alliance from which Choiseul had hoped so much only brought further disasters on France. But it secured indirectly one favourable result: it brought about the retirement of Pitt from the Ministry. He had ample information of the blow that was impending and wished to anticipate it by the capture of the Plate fleet on its road to Spain. The rest of the Ministers refused: and Pitt retired from the office in which he had ruled despotically for four years. He was succeeded after a short interval by Lord Bute.

But the Government of England still felt for some time the impetus that Pitt had given to it, and that impetus lasted long enough for the humiliation of Spain and the disappointment of all the hopes of France. Lord Bute was obliged to declare war against Spain in January 1762. Soon the English navy fell upon the colonies of Spain and what remained of the colonies of France. Martinique was captured in February

1762, and Santa Lucia, Grenada, Tobago and St Vincent soon followed. Portugal refused to join with Spain and was in consequence invaded by Spanish armies, but Spain received too heavy blows from her great antagonist to be able to spare much attention for the war within her own peninsula. Havanna was taken in August, Manilla and the Philippines were ravaged a little later. France was fortunate nowhere: in June her German army was sharply defeated at Wilhelmstadt near Cassel. Choiseul at length recognised that peace was a necessity for France and reopened negotiations in September, 1762.

During all this time the fortunes of Frederick had been sinking lower and lower. The retirement of Pitt was a heavier blow to him than the loss of a battle, for Lord Bute refused to continue the subsidy. But fortune came to his rescue, for in January 1762 the Czarina Elizabeth, the implacable foe of Frederick, died and was succeeded by Peter III, the strongest passion of whose weak brain was a fanatical admiration for the Prussian King. The Russian troops, whose military worth, at first despised, Frederick had learnt at Zorndorf and Kunersdorf, became at first neutral and then in June the active allies of the Prussians. But Peter III's reign was a short one. His German sympathies made him unpopular, and after six months he was overthrown and strangled in prison, and his wife Catherine reigned in his place. She broke off the alliance with Prussia, but remained neutral for the rest of the war. Frederick therefore could hold his own and even procure some advantages, until peace between Great Britain and France brought with it peace between Austria and Prussia.

The Peace of Paris.

The new English Government did not press France so hard as Pitt would have done, and yet the peace had to be bought at a very heavy price.

France indeed recovered Martinique, Guadeloupe and some other islands in the West Indies, and Belle-Isle was restored to her. But on the other hand she had to acquiesce in the loss of Canada and all that lay on the east of

the Mississippi. She got back her Indian possessions as they had been in 1749, which gave her trading stations, but left the effective power in the peninsula to the English. She surrendered Minorca to England and consented to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk. The last stipulation showed most clearly the humiliation of France.

The alliance with Spain brought to France a very serious loss. Minorca was to have been handed over to Spain, but the English insisted on holding it themselves. France indemnified Spain by ceding to her Louisiana. There was the more need of indemnity because Spain had been forced to yield Florida to the British Government.

In brief, France lost India and America and all immediate prospect of acquiring a Colonial Empire. In Europe her reputation for good government and military skill had sunk terribly low—a fact that soon reacted dangerously upon the strength and popularity of the Monarchy and all its institutions. From the days of Louis XI much of the strength of the Monarchy had been due to its military success. Rosbach, Quiberon Bay, and Quebec had dispersed all that remained of the glamour of the throne which had been occupied by Louis XIV and supported by Richelieu. We shall see in the next chapter how on every side opposition to the Monarchy began to show itself.

The Peace of Paris was signed on Feb. 10, 1763. Five days later the Treaty of Hubertsburg brought to an end the war between Austria and Prussia. Austria still remained a great Power. But Maria Theresa was forced to recognise that her long effort to destroy Frederick had failed. The treasury of Prussia was exhausted, her population diminished, her lands in many parts uncultivated. But Frederick turned to internal administration with an energy and a success not less remarkable than the ability which he had displayed in war. Prussia was henceforth the rival of Austria for the leadership of the German world; and time would show that she was destined to be the successful rival.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RISE OF OPPOSITION TO THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY.

THE whole reign of Louis XV shows a rapid decrease in the strength of the French Monarchy and in the popular support given to it. There is decay everywhere, and increase of strength nowhere. It is during this reign that the forces of the Revolution accumulate. The French Monarchy came to resemble a decayed fortress, defended by half-hearted and insubordinate troops against enemies constantly increasing. Among the forces that were undermining the Monarchy and turning the loyalty of France into lukewarm support or bitter antagonism the military disasters recounted in the last chapter must hold a prominent place. Whilst England and Prussia were dealing their blows against France from the outside, movements hostile to the pretensions and power of the Monarchy were developing in the country itself, and it is the purpose of this and the following chapter to examine these. We shall see how after the lapse of nearly a hundred years the Parlements began to assert their privileges and attack those of the Crown: we shall see the throne weakened by an attack on the Church, which achieved its greatest success in the overthrow of the Jesuit order: we shall see the whole current of opinion and thought taking a direction hostile to established institutions;

and in face of all these different dangers we may observe how the Government exhibited a pitiful spectacle of misrule in every direction, while the personal character of the King and the conduct of his Court provoked attack and made enthusiastic loyalty impossible.

The King: his Court and his Ministers.

It is to this last-mentioned topic that we will turn first. During the two last wars the King had shown neither skill nor energy; and latterly power, if it had been exercised by any one, had been chiefly in the hands of his mistress, Madame de Pompadour. In spite of constant rumours that her fall was imminent, she maintained down to her death in 1764 a complete ascendancy over the King's mind. Her most difficult task was to dispel the *ennui* from which the King constantly suffered. She encouraged his building schemes and organised constant *fêtes* and entertainments at Court, lavishing money on these objects, even while the armies of France were unpaid and the taxes were reducing the peasantry to starvation. Later she encouraged the King in a course of license of the most repulsive kind. But the death of Madame de Pompadour opened the way for a still lower descent. After some little delay Madame Dubarry took the vacant post, and thus a notorious courtezan of Paris was exalted to be mistress of the King. He had occasional spasms of repentance, but even the last months of his life saw the continuance of the same detestable orgies.

There have been occasions in history where the reign of a personally contemptible King has been made illustrious by the action of his ministers. In the case of Louis XV that was hardly possible. Weak as he was, he liked to keep up the idea that he was ruler of France. His desire to rule showed itself chiefly in constant suspicion of his ministers and a readiness to intrigue against them. He made a systematic practice of opening the private correspondence of persons about the Court, and often carried on negotiations through secret agents of his own, when his ministers believed they were acting with full

authority. Most of his ministers are now mere names, which are attached for a short time to their various offices and then give way to others equally meaningless. Such men as Boulogne, Silhouette, Laverdy and d'Invan passed without leaving any individual mark on French history. Machault, Maupeou, d'Argenson and d'Aiguillon were more energetic or more honest, but their tenure of office did not really alter the course of French history. Choiseul stands in a class apart both by virtue of his long tenure of office (1758 to 1770), the influence that he exercised, and the considerable talents that he displayed. There is no great or successful action that can be connected with his name, but at least he had a policy, and with the help of Maria Theresa's support managed to impose himself on the King for a long series of years. Those who have followed his career most carefully are of opinion that under more favourable circumstances he might have achieved something noteworthy.

Such a Monarch, without virtue, without honour, without dignity, without energy, could not possibly support the traditions of the throne of Saint Louis and Henry of Navarre and Louis XIV. His early popularity soon disappeared, and did not return. We have in Barbier's 'Journal,' not indeed an authentic account of the actions of the King, but a good reflection of popular feeling about him, and we may there see how the early enthusiasm gave way to suspicion, how ugly stories of his vice and personal cruelty soon gained a ready credence until nothing was too bad to be believed. The same thing may be noted in d'Argenson's 'Journal.' He had been Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1744 to 1747, and during the time that he was writing his 'Journal' his brother was Minister of War, and he had excellent opportunities of understanding the life of the Court. At first he speaks of the goodness and kindness of the King, but soon he notes, without rejecting it, the popular opinion that the King is "incapable of thought or feeling." He comments constantly upon the wild expenses of the King, which make the Court "the grave of France." The

'Journal' ends in 1757 with the gloomiest forebodings: the finances, he says, are so confused that bankruptcy is clearly approaching; the people are in the greatest misery and the Government is to blame. He notes how the old sentiment of loyalty is disappearing: the example of England makes men prefer a balanced form of government: "the opinion gains ground everywhere that absolute Monarchy is the worst conceivable form of government." D'Argenson was indeed a disappointed politician, but he reflected the general feeling in aristocratic circles. Towards the end of the reign the wildest stories about the King were current, and found many to believe them. Even the ridiculous story that he attempted to recruit his strength by baths of human blood was not dismissed by everyone as absurd. But the King seems really to have been, not so much energetically and positively vicious, as listless, aimless, weary of life, and characterless. A worse man would probably have been a less fatal King.

The personal corruption of the Monarch was an important factor in the decay of the Monarchy, for in France a despised government could not possibly be a strong one: but it is more important to trace the growth of public opposition to the Crown.

The action of the Parlements up to the Peace of Paris.

The real strength of the Monarchy was always reflected in the action of the Parlements. They were now the only constitutional channel through which opposition to the government could make itself heard: and hence, though their constitution was in no way representative and their ideas were exclusively those of the legal class, their admitted right of protesting against the King's edicts by refusing to register them gave them a great importance, which they lost as soon as the Revolution had opened up other and better channels for the expression of popular opinion. We have seen the important part played by the Parlement of Paris in the time of the Fronde. But then the Monarchy was afflicted only by a temporary and passing

weakness, and their resistance was suppressed. The situation was changed now, and their attacks upon the Monarchy under Louis XV were persistent and direct, and were only crushed with the greatest difficulty. A striking feature of their struggle is the way in which the other legal corporations of Paris rallied to the side of the Parlement, while the provincial Parlements supported their action, and even went beyond it. The whole of France was discontented and uneasy: any excuse was eagerly seized for manifesting that unrest, and any available means was readily used.

The subjects about which the Parlement of Paris quarrelled with the power of the King were many, but taxation and religious abuses were far more important than all others. In 1749, immediately after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, trouble began on the subject of taxation. Machault, the Controller-General, who owed to the favour of Madame de Pompadour a longer tenure of office than usual, brought forward certain financial measures. Taxes had been imposed during the war and accepted on the understanding that they should not continue after the declaration of peace. Machault, however, proposed to prolong the *dixième* until 1750; and in May 1749 he suggested a new tax on landed property, both of the privileged and unprivileged, which was called the *vingtième*. Parlement protested and talked of the necessity of economy at Court. The clergy joined the Parlement in its resistance, for Machault was making a real effort to disregard privileges, whether noble or ecclesiastical, so far as this particular tax was concerned. The clergy made every effort to retain their right of self-taxation, whereby they managed to evade the payment of their proper share of the national burden. A compromise brought the struggle to an end for the time. Something was conceded to Parlement; the clergy were allowed to save their cherished privileges by voting a large sum instead of the *vingtième*, and by 1750 the struggle was over. But it had some very serious aspects, especially in the evidence it afforded of the growth of a

public opinion hostile to the Crown. The provincial Parlements gave as much trouble as the Parlement of Paris. There were riots in many of the provinces, and even in Paris itself. The feeling of the capital was especially dangerous, and was stimulated by rumours, which sound to us incredible, of the vices and cruelties of the King. The riot was suppressed with much bloodshed; but henceforth the King showed himself in his capital as little as possible.

The Parlements and the Jansenists.

Hardly was this dispute settled when another one began on a religious subject. The Church in the middle of the eighteenth century was no longer what it had been in the reign of Louis XIV, when with Bossuet and Fénelon at its head it shone as much by virtue of its intellectual and moral strength as through social prestige. There were dangerous enemies on every side. The many-sided philosophic movement of the time was absolutely united in opposition to the Church; and Voltaire, Diderot, and others were already raining their barbed shafts upon it. The weapons stung; their effect was apparent, but no attempt, or none that is noteworthy, was made to answer them. The leaders of the Church seem to have thought that the philosophic movement was only a development of Jansenism and Protestantism, and failed altogether to see that a new and a far more dangerous champion had taken the field against them. Conscious of failing power, they could think of no other expedient than to use the old weapon of persecution against their old enemies. The very year of the Revolution found them protesting against the admission of Protestants to the ordinary rights of citizenship; and during the middle of the century they pursued the wretched remnants of Protestantism with relentless hostility. The year 1751 brought the greatest hardships on the Protestants. The Government of France had learnt nothing from the fatal consequences of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Religious meetings in desolate places were tracked out and dispersed, often with bloodshed. Protestant

ministers were seized and hanged: all the old evil machinery of persecution was put into activity again, though Protestantism showed no signs at all of recovery, but rather declined both in the numbers and the zeal of its adherents. Jansenism was in even worse case. It had lost all its old lofty purpose and was now rather a rallying-point for various discontented sections of French society than a genuinely religious movement. But the reigning authorities of the Church felt an especial bitterness against the Jansenists, and the quarrels about the Bull *Unigenitus* were continued in the age of Voltaire. In order utterly to extinguish Jansenism it was determined to refuse the last sacraments of the Church to those who had not accepted the Bull. There had been instances of this in 1749, but they became more frequent in 1752. Nothing could be more contemptible than these inquisitions at the beds of dying men as to whether they accepted doctrines, never very easily intelligible, and at this stage in the controversy almost meaningless; nothing could give a better opening to the assaults of the philosophic party. But for the present we need only observe the contest that arose out of this matter between the Church and the Parlement of Paris. The Parlement maintained that these refusals of the sacraments were a breach of public order and consequently fell within their cognisance; the Archbishop of Paris maintained that they were an affair of purely ecclesiastical discipline. As the whole affair is one quite alien from English ideas and tradition it will be well to take one instance from d'Argenson's 'Journal' and relate it in some little detail. On March 24, 1752, d'Argenson writes, "Yesterday the Chambers of Parlement were summoned to deal with a new case of refusal of sacraments made by the *curé* of Saint Etienne du Mont; he has already been in trouble this winter, for he has been imprisoned for the same offence, coupled with contempt of Parlement. The sacraments have in this instance been refused to an ecclesiastic, the Abbé Le Mère, who is suspected of Jansenism. He was asked whether he believed in the damnation

of M. Pâris (see p. 170), and as he replied in the negative the sacraments were taken away. The dying man called upon the *curé* to administer the sacraments, and Parlement has taken the matter up." Under the next date we read that the *curé* asserted that he had acted upon the instructions of the Archbishop, and the Archbishop admitted having giving the instructions. He was thereupon ordered to attend, but refused. The Parlement could therefore only order the *curé* not to repeat the offence and to administer the sacraments to the Abbé Le Mère within twenty-four hours. Hereupon the King intervened, summoned a deputation of Parlement and censured them for their haste, and promised that he would himself see that the Abbé received the sacraments. But we read in the 'Journal' under the date of March 30 that the Abbé died without the consolations of the Church. This is merely a typical instance; at least scores of similar protests were brought before the Parlement and followed much the same course: Church and Parlement were in almost declared antagonism. In 1752 the Parlement threatened to seize the temporal possessions of the Archbishop if the scandal were not stopped. The King intervened and ordered the abandonment of the procedure, and in Feb. 1753 commanded the Parlement to abstain from all interference in the matter. There followed much fencing, until in May the members adopted the method which they were accustomed to employ in extreme cases, and resigned *en masse*. The members were thereupon exiled by *lettres de cachet*, and the King even thought of abolishing the Parlement and substituting another tribunal, to be called the "Royal Chamber," which would not have its tradition of resistance. But the Clerical party was thoroughly unpopular, and the action of the Parlement of Paris was supported by the Provincial Parlements and applauded by the people of Paris. In the end the King recoiled from violent measures. Negotiations were opened with the first president, Maupeou, and in August 1754 the Royal Chamber was withdrawn and the members returned to take up

their functions. In September the King simply ordered silence in the matter of religious disputes. Parlement consented to register his command, and so the matter was closed for the present. But all spirits had been deeply stirred. English examples and precedents were constantly quoted. The authority of the King was diminished and everything portended a further struggle.

During the Seven Years' War the Parlements offered comparatively little opposition to the Government on the matter of taxation. Patriotism had indeed sunk very low in France, but still the manifest necessities of the State prevented any prolonged resistance from being offered to projects of taxation. But the disputes with the clergy and the King still continued, though their form often changed, and different grounds of resistance were alleged. The most serious crisis was in 1756, when a second *vingtième* was imposed to meet the expenses of the war. The Parlement of Paris, the *cour des aides*, and many provincial Parlements protested. Twice the King had recourse to a Bed of Justice (4 August and 13 December), and on the second occasion he forced them to register an edict declaring that, though Parlement possessed the right of protest, nevertheless all laws would be regarded as registered and valid when fifteen days had passed since their presentation to Parlement. Thus the Government got its way in the end, but the temper of the people was growing dangerous. The Parlement gave as far as possible a colour of patriotism to its resistance. "We demand our rights," it said, "only because they are the rights of the people." The masses of the people in d'Argenson's opinion were already beginning to entertain "ideas of resistance." The attempt of Damiens caused a momentary reaction in the King's favour. But soon the old trouble with Parlement recommenced. In 1757 there were disturbances with the Provincial Parlements; and in 1759, when the need of France was at its sorest, the Parlement of Paris resisted the taxation projects of Silhouette and had to be coerced in a Bed of Justice.

The last years of the war saw the approach of a struggle far more important than these obscure and indecisive quarrels between King and Parlement. For the European attack on the Jesuits began in 1759, and ended in 1764, so far as France was concerned, in the expulsion of the order.

The Abolition of the Order of the Jesuits.

There is no more striking event in the eighteenth century than this catastrophe of the Jesuits. Blows were rained on the order from every side; the destruction was apparently complete; and yet the preparation for the revolution is obscure and some of its causes are still disputed. But it will hardly be questioned that the Jesuit order in the eighteenth century presented many openings for attack. The order had been created as a weapon of aggressive warfare in the great struggle of the Reformation. After the Peace of Westphalia its energies had to be turned into new channels for which the organization of the order, so admirable for its original purposes, was not so suitable. It still gained extraordinary successes in the field of foreign missions, but in Europe there was little place for its activity. The Jesuits no longer shone as controversialists. The attacks of Pascal, however exaggerated they may have been, had undoubtedly left an abiding prejudice against them, and neither they nor any other section of the Church attempted to answer the never-ceasing attacks of the philosophers. They had indeed triumphed over the Jansenists, but their triumph had been dearly bought by the hostility that it had aroused, especially amongst the Parlements. Lastly, their own discipline was somewhat decayed. The injunction against money-making was eluded, and some of their settlements were rich trading establishments. Their devotion to their General was no longer what it had been: quite recently an unpopular General had been displaced by a sort of revolution. Even in the domain of foreign missions two heavy blows had fallen upon them before they began to experience open hostility in Europe. Their missions in China and in Paraguay had been among

their greatest successes. In the former a really vast population had adopted Christianity, at any rate in name; while in Paraguay they had made an extremely interesting experiment in training up a fierce native race to adopt peaceful and civilised habits. But in both places disasters had fallen upon them. They were charged in China with having abandoned some of the central principles of Christianity in their anxiety to conciliate the followers of Confucius; and while they were thus criticised on religious grounds a national rising in China swept their mission away. In Paraguay they were accused of fostering a spirit disloyal to the connection with Spain, and their mission stations were destroyed in consequence.

The two great causes of the unpopularity of the Jesuits, which was soon to be manifested in so striking a fashion, seem to have been these: firstly, all the philosophers and those who sympathised with them in any degree regarded the Jesuits as the great bulwark of obscurantism and persecution; and secondly, the governments of Europe had come to be jealous of them because they formed an independent authority, "a state within a state," owing allegiance to a power outside of the nation. But the general features of this great catastrophe lie outside of our subject. We must confine ourselves almost entirely to what occurred in France.

The first blow had been struck in Portugal. The Jesuits were alleged to have been concerned in an attempt upon the life of the King: and Pombal, the powerful minister of Portugal, deeply imbued with the philosophic spirit of the contemporary French writers, made this the excuse for an attack upon the whole order, against which he had already many causes of complaint. The Jesuits were banished to the Papal dominions: one of their members, Malagrida, was accused before the Inquisition of heresy, and was, on this charge, burned to death (Sept. 1759).

In the next year the attack upon the Jesuits of France

began, and it came from the scene of their greatest successes, their foreign missions. A Jesuit father, Lavalette, was the director of their station in the West Indies, and also the manager of a great commercial establishment at Martinique, which employed 2000 negro slaves and many vessels. After a period of great success disaster had fallen upon the establishment. The slaves were carried off by plague and the vessels captured by English privateers; and, as a result, Father Lavalette found himself unable to repay a sum of more than two million francs that he had borrowed from certain merchants of Marseilles. These merchants prosecuted him for the amount, and, failing to get it, asserted that the whole Jesuit order was responsible. Could the Jesuits have seen into the future they would have put an end to the process by the payment of the whole debt; but they believed that their power in France was still sound, and that, especially, their influence at Court was undiminished. After their offer to pay the sum demanded in masses for the dead had been refused, they appealed to the Parlement of Paris, alleging that Father Lavalette had exceeded the powers entrusted to him by the constitution of the order. The exact nature of their constitution therefore became an important feature in the dispute.

When the cause was brought up to Paris the Jesuits found themselves surrounded by enemies. The Parlement had always been strongly Jansenist in its sympathies, and rejoiced in the opportunity of striking a blow against the persecutors of Jansenism. Public feeling, there is no doubt, was strongly against them, for the literature of the time had a profound influence upon the public mind and its whole tone was diametrically opposed to the doctrine and claims of the Jesuits. Even the Court, in which they had placed their trust, failed them—for reasons which were indeed to their credit, for they had thrown their influence against Madame Pompadour some years before, and had tried to induce the King to dismiss her; while Choiseul, the powerful minister, was heartily in sympathy with the Voltairian movement

and rejoiced in the opportunity of striking a blow against the great enemy. The King was with them rather than against them, but Madame de Pompadour had a complete control over his will; moreover, just now he wanted to induce the Parlement to pass certain taxation edicts and was in the end willing to conciliate it by abandoning the Jesuits.

The storm soon broke over them. In May 1761 the Parlement decided that the order in general was responsible for the debts of Father Lavalette, but it was by no means willing to stop there. In its *rôle* of guardian of the laws of France it ordered an inquiry into the whole constitution and practice of the Jesuits. All the old charges of Pascal were renewed, and the provincial Parlements began to occupy themselves with the same affair. The King and his minister, Choiseul, had not been prepared for so general an attack. The King tried to gain time by ordering (August 1761) that no decision should be proclaimed before the expiry of a year, and submitted the question to be examined by his council. The Parlement did not desist from its own examination, and thus two separate bodies were engaged upon the matter. The question to be considered was whether their constitution contradicted the laws of France or not. The King was at length persuaded, by weariness rather than conviction, to let the Parlement have its way. The Dauphin and the Queen had made great efforts to save the Jesuits, but their influence was overborne by that of Madame de Pompadour and Choiseul. Many of the provincial Parlements did not wait for the Parlement of Paris. Rouen, Bordeaux, Rennes, Metz, Pau, Perpignan, Toulouse, all declared against the Jesuits. At last in August 1762 the Parlement of Paris gave its opinion. Attempts at a compromise had been made. As one of the great grievances against the Jesuits was that they swore obedience to a General who was a foreigner, it was suggested that a separate General should be elected for France. But there was no chance of carrying such a measure; when it was suggested to Ricci, the General

of the order, he rejected it with the words, "*Sint ut sunt aut non sint.*" Thereupon Parlement declared the "so-called society of Jesus" inadmissible in an orderly state on account of its ambition and disorders, but more especially because it aimed "first at complete independence, and then at the usurpation of all authority," and because its constitution withdrew all its members from fidelity to their sovereign and submitted them to a foreign authority. The Jesuit order was therefore declared to be abolished in France, its schools were closed, and its property confiscated to the Crown.

The great decision was taken, and the overthrow of the Jesuit order was accomplished with surprising ease. The result was received with mixed feelings. The joy of the philosophic party was tempered by the known intolerance of the Parlements towards heretical books, and Voltaire began to fear a Jansenist reaction that would outdo the repressive action of the Jesuits. Many of the clergy welcomed the overthrow of a body that had always had its critics within the Church itself, but the majority of the Bishops deplored the fall of the chief bulwark of the Church.

Efforts were made by Pope Clement XIII to secure the revision of the decree, but in vain. In November 1764 a royal declaration entirely suppressed the order in France, and laid down rules for the future behaviour and residence of those who had been members of it.

So ended the movement as far as France was concerned. What followed in other countries and at Rome was even more important from the point of view of the general history of Europe. The example which had been given by Portugal and France was quickly followed in Europe generally. In 1766 the Jesuits were expelled from Spain, the land of their founder's birth, and were there treated far more cruelly than elsewhere. Naples and Parma followed suit. Austria was drawn into the general movement with more difficulty. But the Catholic Powers were not content with expelling the Jesuits; they desired

also the destruction of the order by the Pope. Clement XIII died in Feb. 1769. His successor Clement XIV was subjected to every sort of influence to induce him to sign the order for abolition. After a long resistance, during which the Jesuits used every means to avert their fate, Clement XIV on July 20, 1773, signed the order at last: "It is my own right hand that I am cutting off," he said, "but it has sinned." So for a time the most powerful instrument of the Papacy disappeared. But it could only be for a time. The Jesuits had been far too long the brain and arm of the Roman Catholic Church to be permanently thrown aside, and after a few years they were again active in Europe. It is not necessary to pass any judgement upon the general procedure of the abolition: viewed as an exclusively French incident, it was a very severe blow against the prestige of the Church, and therefore of the throne that was so intimately bound up with it.

Later Quarrels with the Parlement of Paris down to its Suppression in 1771.

The attack upon the Jesuits was, in one aspect, a struggle between the King and the Parlement of Paris, and long before that struggle was ended another cause of dispute had produced a more direct conflict. The end of the Seven Years' War removed all patriotic scruples as to the resistance to the King's projects of taxation, and those projects were certainly of a kind to provoke it. In May 1763 it was proposed that certain taxes, which had been imposed with the limitation that they were to last only during the course of the War, should be continued though Peace had been signed three months before. The second *vingtième* was to be continued for six more years; the "free gifts" of the towns for five more; a new valuation of property was to be drawn up in order to adjust the direct taxation more equitably. The burden of these taxes had been so very heavily felt that the protest against their continuance was loud and widespread. Paris took the lead, but Paris was not alone. What made the Parlementary movements of their period so dangerous was the union of the

various Parlements in a common policy, their common effort to limit the power of the Crown. Rouen, Bordeaux and Toulouse protested through their Parlements, sometimes in language which would have brought down swift punishment upon them in the days of Louis XIV. Revolutionary language began to be heard. The Parlement at Bordeaux spoke of "the causes that produced the overthrow of empires;" and at Toulouse the governor found it necessary to arrest certain of the members. In Paris the *cour des aides* asserted that such proposals ought first to have been submitted to the States-General, a phrase that was soon to gain a very wide currency in France. A Louis XIV would have crushed out such resistance in blood: it was not humanity but sheer weakness in Louis XV which made him try conciliation. The new finance minister flattered his enemies by asking the Parlement, the *cours des aides*, and the *chambres des comptes* for assistance and advice, and the hope was held out that the duration of the *vingtième* would be curtailed; so in December 1763 the edicts were registered by the Parlement of Paris.

The provincial Parlements showed even greater readiness to resist the Crown. In 1764 there was a bitter contest with the Parlement of Rennes, in which Brittany showed something of its old independent spirit. In May 1765 nearly the whole of the members resigned after a violent quarrel with d'Aiguillon, the governor of the province, "regretting that they had lost the confidence of His Majesty." The leader of the movement in Brittany was La Chalotais, already well known throughout France for his vigorous attack on the Jesuits: his indictment of the whole order was the ablest and bitterest attack that the whole struggle produced. He was now placed upon his trial, and the irregularity of the procedure called out the sympathetic protests of the Parlement of Paris. Meanwhile d'Aiguillon ruled his province despotically, and in three years made use of 134 *lettres de cachet* against his opponents. But the sympathy that Paris had expressed with Rennes frightened

the King and his adviser with the prospect of a combined Parlementary protest against the action of the government. Louis XV accordingly held a bed of justice on March 3, 1766, in which he declared that what had occurred at Rennes in no way concerned the Parlement of Paris, denounced "those who maintained that all the Parlements formed one body," and ended by enunciating the maxims of the absolute monarchy in their most provocative form. "The sovereign power, whose chief characteristic is counsel, justice, and reason, resides in my person alone. The legislative authority belongs to me alone: I derive it from no one and share it with no one. Public order emanates from me. My people is identified with me." The maxims of Louis XIV sounded ridiculous in the mouth of Louis XV; but it is a matter of importance to see that, when a Revolution was to many eyes clearly approaching, the Monarchy made no concessions to the new principles: the new ideas and the old met in France with a directness not found elsewhere in Europe. For the moment the Parlement of Paris gave way; but the following years were still full of friction with the provincial and Parisian Parlements. The proceedings of the Parlement of Rennes call for the closest examination. The trial of La Chalotais had broken down for want of evidence; but d'Aiguillon still exercised a despotic rule, and the Parlement of Rennes still lacked the majority of its former members. But Brittany was one of the provinces that kept its old estates, and these urged upon the King the recall of the members of the Parlement who had resigned. The King thought it well to try concession. D'Aiguillon was replaced by a more popular governor, and in 1769 the former members of the Rennes Parlement were restored. But these concessions produced no peace; the oppression of d'Aiguillon and the injustice done to La Chalotais still rankled. The Parlement of Rennes demanded justice to La Chalotais "in the sacred name of individual liberty," and at once began to proceed against d'Aiguillon. The King could not allow his agent to

be judged by his declared enemies; he therefore transferred the trial to Paris and ordered d'Aiguillon to be judged by the Parlement, with the addition of a certain number of Peers to its ranks. But the Paris Parlement showed itself even more bitter against d'Aiguillon than the Parlement of Rennes had been; he was declared "guilty of action which affected his honour" and degraded from his dignity as Peer (July 1770).

Meanwhile new influences were making themselves felt at Court. Madame Dubarry had been installed as avowed mistress in the autumn of 1768. Choiseul was known to have resisted the step, and she was striving in consequence to overthrow him. A party was formed against him. The chief influence in the party was possessed by the Chancellor Maupeou and Terrai, the Controller-General; but their all-important agent was Madame Dubarry. She was schooled to represent Choiseul to the King as a tyrannous minister whose aim was to keep him in tutelage. Louis XV always liked to regard himself as absolute Monarch and listened readily to these suspicions against the ablest minister that his reign had produced.

The trial of d'Aiguillon had been running for rather more than two months when it was suddenly stopped by the personal interference of the King (27 June), who gave as his reason that the tribunal was encroaching upon the secrets of the administration, and that he was personally convinced of the entire innocence of the accused. This was a flagrant violation of all judicial forms. Paris was not alone in protesting: Rennes, Metz, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Besançon felt their judicial liberties equally threatened. On September 3 the King held a bed of justice and forbade the Parlement of Paris to make any further protest against his action. But on September 6 the Parlement declared that "the exercise of absolute power, against the spirit and letter of the constitutional laws of France, revealed a design to change the form of government." On December 7, immediately after the autumn vacations, the King held another bed of justice by way of protest against the

declaration of Parlement, and ordered the magistrates never again to use the phrase "unity and indivisibility" with reference to the different Parlements; never to resign their offices either individually or in a body by way of protest against the action of the King; never again to delay the registration of the edicts. On December 10 the whole of the members resigned: "it remained only for them to perish along with the laws." The King ordered them to return, but in vain; the course of justice was suspended.

It was not the first time that a judicial deadlock had been seen during the reign; but the pronouncement of principles was now so definite as almost to exclude compromise, and moreover the King's advisers were now all for energetic measures of repression. The cabal against Choiseul succeeded in overthrowing him on December 24, 1770; d'Aiguillon took his place, though Maupeou and Madame Dubarry remained the chief influence with the King. They were both for coercive measures. Madame Dubarry is said to have pointed to Vandyke's portrait of Charles I of England that hung in her apartments and to have said to Louis XV, "Your Parlement also will strike off your head." The King consented at last to take strong measures.

On the night of January 19, 1771, musketeers awoke all the members of the Parlement and demanded a plain answer of Yes or No to the question whether they were willing to re-enter the service of the King. Most answered resolutely No; those who had answered Yes, some thirty-five, withdrew their consent next day. All were sent by *lettres de cachet* to different places of exile. The Parlement had often been exiled before and had as often returned; but this time there was to be no return while Louis XV lived. The provincial Parlements protested, that of Dijon in specially strong terms: "You are King," it said, "by virtue of the law, and without the laws you have no right to reign." From many quarters a demand for the States-General was heard. But the King, or his Councillors, had no

intention of yielding. On February 22 there came a decree which began by speaking of the judicial reforms that were admittedly wanted, of the many faults of the Parlement of Paris, and the too great area covered by its judicial authority. Finally it was announced that the King intended to set up various superior Councils in its place. There were to be courts at Arras, Blois, Châlons, Clermont, Lyons, Poitiers. These were to assume the work of courts of final authority for their several districts. The offices of the magistrates were to be neither venal nor hereditary, and the administration of justice was to be gratuitous. A few independent voices were raised in approval of the King's intention, but in the country at large sympathy was given to the victims of the action of the King, and few were prepared to believe in the reality of reforms emanating from Louis XV and his Court. The *cour des aides* and the *grand conseil* both exhibited their disdain for the new creation, and were suppressed by separate edicts in the month of April. A similar fate fell upon the provincial Parlements.

The King seemed to have triumphed, and certain members of the philosophic party welcomed his triumph. The Parlements had been no real representatives of public feeling. If they had crushed the Jesuits they had also displayed a spirit of persecution as abominable as had ever been displayed by the Jesuits. The Parlement of Toulouse had been very zealous in its persecution of the Protestants, and in 1762 had perpetrated the judicial murder of Calas, a Huguenot who had been accused and executed for the murder of his son, whose death was without question due to suicide. The record of the Parlement of Paris was no cleaner. It had inflicted cruel punishment on the printers of Voltaire's books when the author was not to be found; it had condemned the works of Rousseau to be burnt; it had drawn down Voltaire's anger in 1766 by condemning Lally to death; and in the same year it had rivalled the infamy of the Parlement of Toulouse by condemning La

Barre and d'Etallonde to be burnt for a supposed insult to a crucifix. By these and other acts it had come into conflict with the master current of the century, the movement in favour of humanity and religious toleration. These things explain the welcome which Voltaire gave to the overthrow of the Parlements and the victory of the King. But the general feeling even here was against the government. The loss of the last organ of resistance to the King's edicts caused the demand for the States-General to be more loudly made. It is clear that the fall of the Parlements was no sign either of the strength or of the popularity of the Monarchy.

The Foreign Policy of France.

It remains to gather together some scattered events of the reign that do not fall directly under the head of any of the subjects that we have been treating of.

We have already glanced at certain changes in the Royal household. The Queen Maria Leczynska died in June 1768, and almost immediately afterwards Madame Dubarry was installed as the King's mistress. The Dauphin of France had died in Dec. 1762, leaving a son Louis, afterwards Louis XVI, as heir to the throne of France. In May 1770, chiefly through the diplomacy of Choiseul, he was married to Marie Antoinette. This fatal marriage was celebrated with immense pomp; but a large number of spectators were killed in a panic at the marriage festivities, and their death provided a dark augury for the future. The ministers meanwhile were following one another without leaving much trace in history. Laverdi came to the control of the finances in 1763. He was succeeded by d'Invan in 1768, and he in turn gave way 1769 to the Abbé Terrai. During all this time the only really important figure among the ministers was Choiseul. He had the power though not the title of "First Minister," and was popular both with the Court and the Philosophers. He leaves no mark on the internal development of France, but was convinced of the necessity of change. It was to foreign affairs that he devoted

his chief attention. He did his utmost to raise France from the humiliation in which she had been left by the Peace of Paris. He introduced better discipline and organization into the army; and, by special attention to the navy, gave France 64 men of war and 50 frigates by the year 1770. It was largely due to this preparation that France was able to render so good an account of herself in her next collision with England. He intrigued with the discontented colonies of North America; he made alliance with Austria and established friendly relations with Portugal, Holland and Prussia. There are two important events connected with France's foreign relations during the time that he was minister of that department.

The Partition of Poland.

In 1772 Poland underwent her first Partition. Choiseul has been much blamed for the carelessness that he exhibited in this matter. He believed that the jealousies of the other great Powers would prevent it from being accomplished, and that even if it were accomplished it would not be of any great concern to France. The influence of France therefore was not much felt in the intrigue that preceded the election of Stanislaus Poniatowski, the favourite of Catherine of Russia, to the vacant Polish throne in Sept. 1764. Under this King, and through the direct influence of Russia, Poland fell even lower in her social and political organisation. All the rights of the nobles were restored, and political anarchy was thereby established. There was enough national sentiment left in Poland to bring about a rebellion in 1768. But the rebels were not strong enough to resist the might of Russia: their only hope was in the assistance that France might give. Choiseul did his utmost to give indirect assistance to the Poles. He sent them subsidies and tried to stir up Sweden and Turkey to render them help. He would have liked to give them the direct help of a French army: but the responsibilities of France were already too great, and Louis XV would not hear of any important military expedition. Besides, Choiseul's influence was at this time undermined, and

he fell from office before the partition was accomplished. In 1772 the first treaty of Partition was signed between Prussia, Russia and Austria, whereby each seized from Poland a slice of territory and left her helpless against any future attacks. The partition had no immediate effect on France; but that so great an event should happen in Europe without France having any share in its direction showed how different the position of France in Europe was from what it had been a century before.

Corsica annexed to France.

But in another direction the administration of Choiseul achieved a great success and made the last addition to the territory of France during the existence of the old monarchy. Corsica had for a long time been a recalcitrant subject of Genoa, and the forces of the republic were overtaxed in the attempt to bring it into complete subjection. French assistance had already been called in more than once, but still the Corsicans under Paoli carried on a stubborn warfare in the mountainous districts of the island. At last in May 1768 Genoa, despairing of ever reducing the islanders, ceded the sovereignty of the island to France in return for two million francs. It was thought at first that Great Britain would refuse to allow the cession, but when the Corsicans, indignant at their transference to a new sovereign without their will "like sheep in the market," broke out into open rebellion, there came very slight and indirect assistance from England. Still, it was a matter of much difficulty to bring the island to obedience. Chauvelin was sent over with French troops, and in September 1768 was sharply defeated. His place was taken in the spring of 1769 by the Comte de Vaux, who, owing largely to divisions among the Corsicans, succeeded in subduing the island. Paoli, deserted by his confederates, took refuge on an English vessel in June 1769. France thus gained an island of great importance for naval purposes, and a few months later Napoleon was born a French subject. It was a striking and very valuable success for France. Choiseul would have liked still further to challenge the

supremacy of England upon the sea. But Louis XV would not hear of any further wars, and thus the collision was postponed.

Little more remains to be said of this inglorious reign. The last years were marked by a series of very bad harvests and great distress. Earlier in the reign the government, acting under the influence of the Economists—the only body of "the philosophers" who had any practical influence on the government—had removed the prohibitions against the export of grain; but in 1770, owing to the scarcity of corn, the Abbé Terrai was induced to re-enact the prohibition. From 1770 to 1772 there was great scarcity, amounting to actual starvation in many provinces, and in consequence riots and mutterings of rebellion. The ugliest feature of the whole situation was the suspicion, well founded in fact, that the King and the government were partly answerable for the misery of the people. The King was in perpetual need of money, and now he and his ministers formed a sort of company for buying up grain and exporting it from the country, in order to push up the price. The grain was then re-imported and sold at a great profit. The nineteenth century has grown accustomed to such speculations on the part of individual capitalists, but the crime was a new one to the eighteenth century. Nothing could throw a more damaging light on the pretensions of the Monarchy to represent the people than this odious *pacte de famine*, whereby the descendant of Henry IV found his own interest in the misery and the starvation of his people.

The finances showed no improvement, and the fall of the Parlement of Paris had removed a check upon the expenditure of the Crown. The King and his mistress squandered money faster than ever. Most of the payments were by *acquits au comptant*, which were not submitted to any supervision. Henceforth, to the end of the reign, Chaos reigned supreme in the finances of France. The Parlement had not only resisted the reckless expenditure of the Crown: it had also been the

enemy of the wise and necessary attacks on privilege that had occasionally been attempted. The opportunity, however, was not used to introduce taxation on a new principle. Terrai did not look beyond expedients that should tide over the present difficulties. In the autumn of 1771 he established one *vingtième* (which had hitherto been regarded as a temporary expedient) as a permanent tax, while a second *vingtième* was to last for ten more years. Municipal office was again made venal, and office-holders were to pay a special tax. Those recently ennobled were not to be quite exempt from taxation. A step, but a timid and hesitating step, was thus taken towards the inevitable financial goal—the destruction of all financial privilege. But a huge burden of debt and a terribly tangled financial system descended to Louis XVI.

There was no change for the better in Louis XV as he neared his end. There was little joy in this life where pleasure was the only object. He was religious after a fashion, but his religion amounted to little more than this—that he believed that he would be spared from punishment in a future world by supporting a faith in which he had no vital belief. His former popularity had entirely disappeared; he was haunted by the fear of death but never changed his manner of life. He was attacked by the small-pox in May, 1774, and died on the 10th. His funeral was accomplished with indecent haste, and France heaved a deep sigh of relief to think that Louis, once called the Well Beloved, was dead, and a new era might be looked for. The reign that thus ended was one of the most critical in French and indeed in European history. During it the doom of the Absolute Monarchy was sealed. The forms of the age of Louis XIV could not in any case have been made permanent: they must have given way to something freer and more equal. Nor can the French Revolution be traced merely to the bad government of France: it was primarily due to the advance of the mind of man to different and higher ideals, to different and nobler conceptions of government, society and

religion. But the turbulence and bloodshed that accompanied the Revolution and so fatally influenced it were largely the result of Louis XV's miserable reign. The three chief elements of the social and political system of the Ancient Régime had all suffered fatal blows. The Monarchy, once the maintainer of order, the defender of the Commons against the Nobility, the successful leader of the nation in war, had now through its folly and indifference brought both military disaster and disgrace upon France, and had joined with the Nobility in preying upon the misery of the people. The Nobility had long been deprived of political power, but they had in the reign of Louis XIV exhibited high military qualities; Rosbach and the other defeats of the Seven Years' War had shown them undisciplined, dishonourable, and as military leaders quite incapable. The Church, whose part in French history had been so important, and on the whole so noble, seemed to have lost all its old qualities except its love of persecution. Every bulwark of the old order was decayed; and yet the King and his advisers either refused to recognise the danger, or comforted themselves with the thought that the deluge would not come in their day.

CHAPTER XX.

THE INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CONDITION OF FRANCE AT THE END OF THE ANCIENT RÉGIME.

The Intellectual Movement of the age.

BEFORE we pass on to a survey of the Reign of Louis XVI it will be necessary to say something of the all-important intellectual movement of the period; for this was its most salient feature, compared with which even the military history of the reign is unimportant. The literary and philosophical worth of the writings of this period may sometimes have been exaggerated, but their political and social effect can hardly be overrated. Since the time of the Reformation there had been no body of thought that acted so immediately and decisively on political and social institutions.

Characteristics;

It is difficult to generalise about an intellectual movement that embraces wide differences and even contrasts, and spreads over the civilised world; but, if we confine our attention to France, we perceive that the movement is homogeneous, and it will be worth our while to notice certain striking characteristics.

1. its Negative character;

We may notice first the destructive tendency of the whole movement, and its hostility to existing institutions and beliefs. Even those writers who seem most constructive, such as Montesquieu and Quesnay, were really advocating principles quite inconsistent

with the Ancient Régime; and the large majority of the writers do not conceal their hostility to Church and State. To all, the ecclesiastical system of France seemed to rest on doctrines that were doubtful and to be oppressive in action: to all, the political system seemed to require either total abolition or sweeping reforms.

2. Its Positive and Constructive elements.

But secondly, strongly destructive though the tendency of this movement was, it was not merely destructive, nor was the Revolution that grew out of it a merely destructive movement. Its destructive aim was indeed clear and definite, while its attempts at construction were vague and often mistaken. But its central principles were the basis on which all future political and social buildings were to be reared. For it asserted, often openly, and at other times by implication, that neither hereditary right, nor long-standing tradition formed the proper criterion of the worth of a government or society; but that everything should be brought to the touchstone of human utility. Philanthropy was the enthusiasm of the whole school. It is in the interests of humanity that Voltaire poured his scorn now on Monarchs for their ruinous wars, now on the Church for its murderous persecutions, and again on the Parlements for the cruelty and injustice of their legal procedure. With the same object Diderot and his confederates worked at their great Encyclopædia, trying to turn the accumulating results of science to practical and human account. Even Rousseau's passionate attacks on civilization had the same real object; it was in the interests of the future that he attacked the present even when he presented himself as the champion of the remote past.

3. The Rejection of the Past.

A third characteristic is sufficiently general to be noted here. There was in most of these writers a complete rejection of the historic past, and even in Montesquieu, the most historically minded of all of them, a very inadequate understanding of it. All were full of hostility and contempt for the Middle Age. To

Voltaire there was nothing interesting in European history between the end of the classical world and the Renaissance; and Voltaire was here as everywhere the most typical figure of the age. While France thus rejected her own past and that of Mediæval Europe generally, she turned with enthusiasm to Greece and Rome. Some of Rousseau's strangest social dreams are to be explained by reference to Sparta or Athens or Early Rome; and the result of these appeals to classical antiquity was seen, when the Revolution came, in the adoption of classical dress and of classical phrases: in the red "cap of liberty" and the "altar of the fatherland"; in Vergniaud's exclamation that he and his fellow Girondists had dreamed they were in Rome and woke to find they were in France; in Madame Roland's confession that she had often wept to think she was not born a Spartan girl. The general feeling was that the past was a dark prison from which humanity was just emerging under the guidance of reason, which henceforth would guide mankind without reference to the past.

4. The debt to England.

Lastly it is interesting to note how great was the influence of English thought and writings upon the ideas current in France. "There blows from England," wrote d'Argenson in the year 1757, "the breath of a philosophy that upholds free and republican forms of government." The century saw a long series of wars between France and England, and during the reign of Louis XV the wars were conducted with very great fierceness, and the losses of France were terrible. But it is a very remarkable fact that these wars hardly interrupted the literary and philosophical intercourse of the two countries. The writers of France were themselves enemies of the French Government, and they did not feel very keenly its losses and its degradation. In this intellectual commerce England received as much as she gave, but she gave much. There is hardly a writer of note upon whom the spectacle of the political and intellectual freedom of England did not produce an effect. Montesquieu's

generalisations about government are largely based on what he believed to be English theory and practice.

Montesquieu.

It is only possible to give a very brief summary of the writers on whose works these generalisations have been founded. Montesquieu (1689—1755) was the oldest of the group, and stood apart from the rest by virtue of his more detached and philosophic temper. He was a counsellor in the Parlement of Bordeaux, and subsequently, in 1716, its president, and there was something of the lawyer in all that he wrote. His first work was a light but very penetrating satire of French customs and forms of government, published in 1721 under the title of the "Persian Letters." Then came in 1734 a very interesting treatise on the causes of the greatness and decline of the Romans. In 1748 was published his great work, the *Spirit of the Laws*. Montesquieu poured out here all the accumulated thought of his lifetime, and the importance of the book as a contribution to political science was at once recognised. Any examination of its theories would lie outside of the scope of this work. To understand its contemporary effect it is only necessary to note that it attacked slavery, religious persecution and despotism, and hardly concealed the author's belief that the government of France was a despotism. It praised on the other hand a balanced and limited Constitution, and found many excellences in the Constitution of England. The reception accorded to this great book showed the earnestness that there was in a society which is sometimes described as wholly frivolous. In eighteen months there were twenty-two editions.

The Encyclopædists.

The Encyclopædists form a class by themselves. The two chief authors of the great Encyclopædia were Diderot (1713—1784) and d'Alembert (1717—1783), but a large number of other authors collaborated in it. Diderot was unquestionably the greatest of all, and it may be doubted whether the inherent difficulties of the task and the hostility of the Government

would ever have been surmounted without Diderot's fiery courage. The Encyclopædia differed from other compilations bearing the same title by the fact that it was inspired by a few dominating ideas throughout. Ecclesiastical systems and creeds were strongly opposed in it, and institutions of government severely criticised. Its more positive and constructive side was seen in the special care devoted to articles dealing with industrial processes. But, quite apart from his work in the Encyclopædia, Diderot's is a great name. Without producing any great masterpiece he broke new ground in various directions. He wrote plays and novels, and a valuable essay on the Theory of the Beautiful. The Government of France knew him to be an enemy, and his impetuous nature brought him within the grasp of the law where other authors eluded it. His works were burnt more than once, and in 1749 he was imprisoned in the Bastille. Later he gained the friendship and the protection of Catherine of Russia.

The Economists.

The Economists form another important group which had, during Louis XV's reign and that of his successor, a great influence upon the Government. Quesnay (1694—1774) was the leader of the group. He was a physician of simple and unambitious character; but he was physician to Madame de Pompadour, and through her gained the ear of the King, who called him "his philosopher." He invented the phrase "political economy," and in his *Tableau Économique*, published in 1758, attempted an analysis of economic laws with a scientific thoroughness hitherto unknown. He followed it by a treatise on *Natural Right*. He differed widely from most of the writers of the time in his praise of an intelligent despotism and his dislike for a "balanced" system of government: but he was a decided opponent of the existing economical order, which was one mass of restrictions and limitations, trades-guilds, provincial customs houses, feudal dues &c. He gave the signal for an attack on this whole system when he resumed his political

economy in the single phrase "*laissez faire, laissez passer.*" His root theory was that land was the source of all wealth and should therefore bear the whole weight of taxation; and this became the distinguishing doctrine of the Physiocrats, as his followers called themselves, among whom Mirabeau and Turgot are the most important. This school was however distinguished not merely by its adhesion to a certain theory, but also by the practical energy with which it turned to the reform of economical grievances. We have already seen that Quesnay's influence was powerful enough to procure the abolition of the restrictions against the exportation of corn, although these restrictions were revived in 1770 in a moment of panic.

There are many writers of distinction, such as Freret the historian, Buffon the great naturalist, Condillac, Helvetius and Mabli, who would claim a place in a history of French Literature but must be omitted here. We must pass on to the two names that are for us the most important—to Voltaire and Rousseau.

Voltaire (1694—1778) seems to dominate the whole century in France and forces his way into the histories of Prussia and England as well. From the publication of his *Œdipe* in 1718 to his death he was always the most prominent figure in literary France. No account of his life and no catalogue of his works can be given here. We need only touch on a few important or critical points. He was imprisoned in the Bastille in 1717 for an epigram of which he was not the author, and wrote his *Œdipe* during his imprisonment. He visited England in 1724, and what he saw left an ineffaceable impression on his mind. He saw thought applied to work of practical usefulness and not dissipated, as he conceived, in barren speculation; a tolerance and freedom of thought which seemed almost complete in comparison with what he knew and had experienced in France; and finally public honour rendered to men of letters and science. Prussia had an influence on Voltaire's life even greater than that exercised by England. We have already

seen how with him French thought penetrated Germany, and though his relations with the Court of Frederick, where he lived from 1750 to 1753, were in the end unfortunate and ridiculous, what he saw of Prussia and Prussia's King had a permanent effect on his mind and ideas. He had no ambition for martyrdom, and was occasionally willing even to flatter the King of France; but still he felt himself unsafe in France, and therefore retired first to Geneva and then to Ferney, and there, just beyond the borders of his native country, continued to direct and stimulate the thought of his fellow-countrymen.

Voltaire did not attempt to establish a philosophic theory or to support a system of government, and while the influence of his ideas upon his contemporaries was immense, he has no claims to be regarded as a great or systematic thinker. It is not necessary to speak of him as a poet and *littérateur*: we are concerned only with the effect of his writings upon contemporary opinion. He threw all the weight of his vast authority against the Church, its ecclesiastical system and its creeds. There is nothing that he wrote, from the time when in his *Œdipe* he denounced the power of the priests as resting on the ignorance of the people down to the end of his long life, which does not bear directly or indirectly on this object. His own religious opinions fluctuated considerably, but he always remained a convinced deist, and towards the end of his life warmly defended his position against the atheism of d'Holbach and others. But in the sphere of religion it is his destructive work alone that is important. Satire, novel, epic poem, drama were all employed for this end; and towards the end of his life he could see the immense effect that he had produced and could boast that he had accomplished. more than Luther and Calvin. But he also constituted himself the opponent of oppression wherever it was to be found, especially of religious oppression, but also of oppression and injustice that had the support of the secular laws. He rehabilitated the memory of Lally, raised the Calas family from the ignominy caused by the

unjust verdict of the Toulouse Parlement, and impressed upon the consciences of his contemporaries the cruelty of such punishments as those of La Barre and d'Etallonde, who were beheaded for an insult to a crucifix. He opposed the use of torture, and advocated the rare application of capital punishment and many other reforms in criminal procedure. In fact he became recognised as the champion of all who suffered from injustice or oppression. In what concerns the political system of France his opinions are far less decided and his influence much smaller. Certainly here he was no revolutionary. He spoke indeed of the "revolution that was coming," but he meant by the word a peaceful change in men's convictions, that should be accomplished, as his disciple Grimm said, "without a drop of blood." In his *Age of Louis XIV* he maintained that the progress of philosophic enlightenment had contributed to strengthen the rights of sovereigns, and he praised the happiness of agricultural France, "where the cultivator of the soil is as happy and prosperous as in any kingdom of the world." He saw the evil that had been done by evil Kings, and wrote very noble words about war and its fatal consequences. But he had no desire for a democracy. "We have never pretended," he wrote, "to enlighten shoemakers and servants. What the populace wants is guidance, and not instruction." He had seen the extraordinary results produced in Prussia by the strong government of Frederick, and would have liked to see in France similar reforms by similar means.

Rousseau.

Rousseau (1712—1778) stands at the opposite extreme of the philosophic movement from that occupied by Voltaire. He was born in Geneva, and in his youth fed his mind on romances and on Plutarch's *Lives*. The first forty years of his life were passed in obscurity and often in distress, caused largely by his morbid and emotional temperament. He abjured early in life the Protestant faith in which he was born, but, later, returned to it. It was not until he

was forty years of age that he made his first appearance in the world of letters, but before that he had gone to Paris and even produced a fairly successful operetta. In 1750 his eye was caught by the announcement of a prize offered by the Academy of Dijon for an essay on the question, "Whether the arts and sciences had contributed to purify morals or not?" The question awoke in him his unconscious disgust for civilisation, and he wrote a passionate and eloquent essay maintaining an answer in the negative. Much of what is characteristic in his maturer thought is already to be found in this essay; he maintained the natural goodness of man, and ascribed his corruption to the influence of institutions. He became at once a notability in the world of letters, and his adherents rivalled in numbers and enthusiasm those of Voltaire himself. Other and more important works soon followed. He published *Julie, or the New Héloise*, in 1760; and *Émile*, a treatise on education in the form of a romance, in 1762. He had already written on political questions; he had drawn up a Constitution for the Poles, and had been consulted by the Corsicans; in 1762 he summarised his political doctrine in the *Social Contract*. After that his troubles, real and imaginary, increased. He wrote little more except his *Confessions*, one of the most remarkable of autobiographies, which was not published until after his death.

It is a very difficult task to give a summary account of his opinions and influence; but he had so great a share in shaking the *ancien régime* and in inspiring the Revolution, that something must be said on the subject. His works are partly a reaction against the tone of contemporary literature, against its materialism and cynicism. Despite the logical form in which much of Rousseau's work is cast, it is to the feelings and not to the reason of man that he chiefly appeals: and his own reason was usually the blind servant of his feelings. A great part, and the most valuable part, of his work hardly calls for notice here. His was the most potent of those influences

which, at the end of the eighteenth century, opened men's eyes and hearts to the charm of natural scenery. He did much to destroy the detestable artificiality of the system of education, and turned the hearts of parents towards their children again. Against the materialism of some writers and the cold and purely intellectual deism of others, he opposed a passionate and almost hysterical belief in a personal God.

The Social Contract.

It is his political theories that most concern us, though they are even more important to the student of the Revolution than to us, who are only following the destinies of the old Monarchy. Here, too, he substituted belief for criticism, and, in addition to the attacks with which most writers were content, he advanced theories that should serve as a groundwork for a new construction. He cannot be said to have succeeded: examination and experience have left hardly a shred of his theories intact, but their historical importance is great; for without them the fall of the Monarchy and the coming of the Revolution would have lacked some of their most characteristic features. The phrase "the Social Contract" gives the key to his politics, for he imagined that society had grown out of an ideal primitive condition of individual independence by means of a "social contract," whereby all individuals consented to abandon their individual liberty, not into the hands of any King or Governor, but into those *of the community*. In the name of this unhistoric theory he denounced existing governments. "Man is born free," he wrote, "and everywhere he is in chains." It followed from his theory that sovereignty always, of right, rested with the people: it could not be lost by tradition or custom, or even given away by the will of the people themselves. It is inalienable and inviolable; and all the rulers of the earth are the mere delegates of the people, who, when they are displeased with any government, have the right to alter or abolish it. It is at once apparent how revolutionary such a theory was in the actual condition of France; and the history

of the Revolution was to show how readily it lent itself either to anarchy or despotism, according as the will of the sovereign people was represented as being against or in favour of the action of the government. This is the central doctrine of the *Social Contract*, but it is far from being the only one, or even the only one that powerfully influenced the history of France. Of the others the most important are the dogma of the essential goodness of human nature, which would be at once revealed if the artificial restraints of society were removed; the distrust of representative institutions and the preference for a direct participation of the citizens in the government; the decided rejection of all extant forms of religion, while the necessity of a "civil religion" is asserted, whose "sentiments of sociability" are to be required from all citizens on pain of banishment. We cannot follow any further ramifications of the theory. It did not merely gain an intellectual adherence from many, but inspired a fanaticism equal and closely akin to religious passion. The *Social Contract* became "the Bible of the Revolution[1]."

The Condition of France.

In conclusion it will be well here to survey very briefly the situation in France at the close of the reign of Louis XV. It has already been done in another volume of this series[2], with respect to the Revolution: here it will be our object to see how it endangered the old Monarchy.

The word that seems to sum up the situation best is not

[1] Lavisse in his "General View of the Political History of Europe" sums up the general character of this all-important intellectual movement in the following passage. "When, owing to the faults of its Kings, the country detached itself from Royalty it raised itself all at once to the idea of Humanity. French writers of the eighteenth century rediscovered this idea, which had been lost since the time of Plato, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, or rather had been replaced in the middle ages by the ecclesiastical idea of Christianity, and later on by the political idea of Europe."

[2] *The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era*, by J. H. Rose.

so much injustice and misery (though both existed in France in alarming proportions) but instability. The monarchical system was in theory absolute. The States-General had disappeared; the religious opposition of the Catholic Church and of the Huguenots had been in different ways overcome; the Parlements had at last been abolished; and the action of the law could be overridden by the use of arbitrary warrants of arrest (*lettres de cachet*). There apparently remained no institution in France that could seriously limit or check the action of the King. But this Monarchy, in theory so absolute, was really decrepit. It had outlived the circumstances that had made it so eminently useful, and the meanness and vice of Louis XV had destroyed its prestige, and made rational loyalty very difficult. Nearly every class was alienated from it. The Nobility, excluded from office by the royal *intendants*, had no liking for the institution that gave them social prestige but deprived them of political power. The middle class and the legal bodies were especially hostile. The clergy alone gave an equivocal support; and even among the clergy there were large numbers with an earnest desire for reforms, both political and ecclesiastical.

From the people at large the Monarchy was not likely to get any support. The majority were indeed uneducated and ignorant, but some sense of injustice and consciousness of misery was beginning to be felt. The system of government was both burdensome and stupid. It was probably very far from being the worst or the most oppressive in Europe. Poland was in an inconceivably worse condition: many German states were no better off. But the condition of France was very bad, and France was the country where the zeal for new ideas and new forms of society was keenest and the government rottenest. The artisan of the towns was hampered by the system of taxation and the trades-guilds that kept him from industrial employment. But it was the peasant that had most cause to complain. If he were a proprietor (and a large proportion of France was divided into small holdings that were

the property of the cultivator) he had still to bear the antiquated burden of feudal dues and restrictions at the same time that he paid many taxes from which the privileged classes were exempt. So heavily did the taxes accumulate upon the unfortunate peasant that it is reckoned by enquirers not prejudiced against the *ancien régime* that nearly 60 per cent. of the peasants' earnings were taken from him in the shape of taxes.

Taxation.

The system of taxation under the *ancien régime* was extremely complicated, but its main features may be grasped without difficulty. The division of the population of France into the privileged and unprivileged has often been alluded to in this book. Most of the financial evils of France were traceable to it. It caused the greatest injustice in the fixing of the taxes, for they were for the most part imposed by those who did not pay them. During the eighteenth century, and for some time before it, the number of the privileged had been constantly augmenting, and the burden on the unprivileged in consequence increasing.

The taxes of France were either direct or indirect; the direct taxes being collected by the agents of the Crown, the indirect being farmed out to individuals or companies. The chief direct taxes were the *taille*, the *capitation*, the *vingtième*, and the *corvée*. Of these the *capitation* and the *vingtième* have already been noticed: they were taxes of the nature of an income-tax, which ought to have fallen upon privileged and unprivileged alike, but, as we have seen, the privileged really managed to evade their fair share of the burden.

The Taille.

The *taille* was the most important and characteristic of all French taxes. When it was granted in perpetuity to the Monarchy in 1439 the gravest possible blow was struck against the chances of self-government in France. It was a tax on the land and house-property of the unprivileged; and in its assessment and collection every kind of economical blunder was committed. In some parts of France it took the form of a charge on the land, and

was in direct proportion to the amount under cultivation: there the abuses were not so great. But in the rest and much the greater part of France it was arbitrarily assessed upon the supposed income of the peasant. Any sign of improvement, any mark of enterprise necessarily produced an increase in the *taille*: even punctuality of payment was dangerous, for it might be interpreted as a sign of easy circumstances. The richest taxpayers in each district were made responsible for the collection of the tax, and the burden and annoyance of this duty were most keenly felt. Two extracts from d'Argenson's *Journal* clearly illustrate the working of the *taille*. In Sept. 1750 he writes, "A Government official has arrived in the village where my country house is situated, and tells me that the *taille* will have to be considerably raised during the coming year. The peasantry, he says, are more prosperous than elsewhere; he has seen the feathers of poultry on their door-steps, and clearly they are living well....This is the sort of thing that discourages the peasant and makes the kingdom miserable. Henry IV, were he living to-day, would weep to see it." In Feb. 1752 he speaks of the unexampled misery of the people, and quotes with approval the opinion that it is due to "the practice of making the most prosperous inhabitants of the parish responsible for the *taille*."

The Corvée and Gabelle.

The *corvée*, or system of forced labour, was one of the oldest of French taxes and possibly inherited from Roman times. There were parts of Europe where it was incomparably more onerous than in France, but nowhere did it produce so much discontent. The *corvée* was either royal or noble, and varied in amount in different parts of France. It did not produce nearly so much complaint as the *taille* or the *gabelle*, but it must have amounted to a very serious economic burden.

The indirect taxes included the *gabelle* or salt monopoly, the *aides* or taxes on various commodities, of which wine was far the most important, the *octroi*, a tax upon goods entering

the various municipalities of France, and the *customs* exacted at the frontier of France and at various places in the interior as well; for, though Colbert had diminished the number of these internal customs, he had by no means destroyed them altogether. Next to the *taille* the *gabelle* pressed most heavily on the people of France. Everyone more than eight years of age was compelled to buy a certain amount of salt at prices fixed by the State. The salt thus obtained might only be used for ordinary culinary purposes: for other objects an extra supply of salt must be procured. But what made the burden of the *gabelle* especially irritating was the vast difference in the price of salt in districts often closely adjoining. It varied from 62 livres the *quintal* (100 lbs.) to 50 sous. In Picardy the price was 57 livres, but in the city of Amiens it was 3 livres 10 sous. The temptation to smuggling was irresistible: a third of the prisoners in the galleys were there for salt-smuggling, and it is reckoned that on an average nearly 3500 people were punished for the offence every year.

For the last years of the old Monarchy the financial question was all important. Far-reaching changes were indeed certain to come sooner or later; but France might have had to wait for many years had it not been for the imminence of bankruptcy and the impossibility of avoiding it by any means that Louis XIV had known, or his successors could discover. The two great evils—the exemption of the privileged classes and the ruinously expensive method of collecting the taxes—had been constant features of the financial life of France. In Louis XIV's reign Vauban had written, "the two bleeding wounds of France are, first, the army of tax-gatherers and the mismanagement and confusion of their business; and secondly the prodigious number of those exempt from taxation, the army of privileged persons who claim to be free from the ordinary taxation of the realm." And Taine after examining the system on the eve of the Revolution writes, "Why is the taxation so burdensome?...What renders the charge over-

whelming is the fact that the strongest and those best able to bear taxation succeed in evading it, the prime cause of misery being their exemption."

Summary.

We see, therefore, at the top, a Government with all the attributes of absolutism, excluding all other institutions, but itself rotten and tottering; and below, a people oppressively and unjustly governed, and at last beginning to be conscious of its condition and to inquire for the cause. Such a combination would be dangerous at any time. But if we add that the educated classes were largely penetrated by revolutionary doctrines, which not only destroyed their loyalty to the old institutions, but also inspired them with passionate enthusiasm for new ones, we shall not wonder that violent disorder accompanied the changes in the social order of France. But, notwithstanding this ignominious end of the old Monarchy, it is necessary to protest against the view which would make of its history nothing but a record "of wickedness, of falsehood, oppression of man by man[1]," nothing but an instrument of evil of which at last the world was happily rid. A study of French history shows that, though it had become hopelessly corrupt, and had been accompanied by much evil, it had also accomplished much unquestionable good. It had saved France from internal disorder and foreign dominion, and had enlarged her frontiers. It had secured her unity of language, customs, and administration, and had allowed a high form of civilization to spread through the country. It had fostered and stimulated the sense of nationality. The Revolution was not so entire a break with the past as its chief actors imagined; it was not able to tear up the roots of the nation that were embedded in the Middle Ages. In many respects it did but continue under republican forms the work of the Monarchy. Modern France is not only the creation of the Revolution, but also of the line of great rulers that stretches far back, and among others of Louis XI, of Henry of Navarre, of Richelieu, and of Louis XIV and Colbert.

[1] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, Book v.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XVI.

THE reign of Louis XVI belongs rather to the Revolution than to the old Monarchy. For, during the fifteen years that preceded the calling of the States-General, the new ideas that gained so great a triumph in the Revolution were already the master ideas of France or were rapidly moving towards mastery. The ideas of the absolute Monarchy were discredited; they found few to support them in theory; and though in practice the old system had still its defenders, the line of defence was very different from that which would have been adopted by Bossuet or Louvois or Louis XIV. Liberty, representative government, the extinction of privilege, equality, humanity—these are ideas which even their opponents had to salute with respect during these years. The task of the statesmen was to adapt the old monarchical fabric to suit the requirements of the new generation of Frenchmen. Their failure made its entire destruction inevitable; for the old ideas could not return again.

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The death of Louis XV came as a vast relief to France; and the new reign, as is usually the case with new reigns, was greeted with enthusiasm. Louis XVI had been brought up by those who regarded the habits of his grandfather's Court with repulsion. His character has been much debated, for he

became the chief martyr of the Revolution; it has on the one side been praised by those who wished to discredit the Revolution, and on the other blackened by those who wished to apologise for it. If we judged him only by the first fifteen years of his reign we should have little difficulty in discerning a man of pure life, of good and philanthropic intentions, of weak intellect, of much stubbornness but little real strength of will. His religious convictions were genuine and strong, and gave to the last months of his tragic life consolation and dignity; but they injured the policy of his early reign. His lamentable failure to support his first two finance ministers was partly due to his dislike for the philosophic principles of Turgot and the Protestantism of Necker. In a humble position of life he would have deserved the esteem of his fellow-men. But, placed on the throne, in most critical and stormy times, he deserves at least this censure, that he was neither able to guide France himself nor was willing to allow anyone else to do it for him. His wife, Marie Antoinette, had the decision and strength of character that he lacked. But she had little influence over him at first, and when she acquired an influence she used it in a fatal manner. From the first she was unpopular as an Austrian princess, who was believed to have more fondness for her old home than for France. Court life was less stringent in its etiquette at Vienna than at Versailles, and she rebelled against the restrictions that were placed upon the Queen of France. Her freedom from convention was interpreted by some sections of public opinion in the most sinister way; but there seems little or no basis for the worst charges that were brought against her. Culpable ignorance of the needs of France and headstrong wilfulness in pursuing her own course are the worst charges that can be brought against her.

Louis XVI was not twenty years of age when he became King. His character and age made it certain that much would depend on his choice of ministers. After some delay

the chief post was given to Maurepas, who had already had official experience under Louis XV, and was recommended to the new Government by the fact that he had been disgraced by Madame de Pompadour. But Maurepas was old, frivolous, and without settled political convictions. The times demanded a stronger hand. A clean sweep was made of the discredited agents of Louis XV. Madame Dubarry was at once disgraced. D'Aiguillon, Maupeou and Terrai were dismissed. Foreign affairs were given to Vergennes, and Saint Germain was made Minister of War; but, most important of all, Turgot, the philosopher, statesman, and economist, received charge of the Navy. But the post was too small and not well suited to him. In July 1771 he was made Controller-General of Finances.

Turgot.

The financial outlook was very serious. There was an annual deficit of 22 million livres, and a standing debt of 205 millions. The taxes were raised with difficulty and amidst increasing complaints. Even in time of peace the resources of the country seemed strained. But the minister who now assumed the control of the finances was no mere man of accounts who was prepared to make the best of the situation as it stood. He was a thinker and statesman of the first rank, who as *intendant* of the province of Limousin had already learnt the needs of the country and experienced some of the difficulties encountered in trying to meet them. He was not merely bent on economy and a better adjustment of means to ends, but was determined to introduce into France a new political and economical organization that should give her fresh resources. Turgot was under no illusion as to the difficulties he would encounter. He reviewed in a letter to the King, written at the very beginning of his ministry, the obstacles and calumnies he would have to face. "It is," he wrote, "on the faith of your Majesty's promises that I charge myself with a burden that is perhaps beyond my powers: but I put my whole trust in your support, in the support which you

will give me as a man, upright, just and good, rather than as a King."

The question of the abolished Parlements was one of the first that pressed for a solution. The new courts—the creation of Maupeou and Louis XV—laboured under the unpopularity which attached to all the acts of the late reign. Public opinion seemed to demand the return of the old Parlements, and many of Louis XVI's councillors urged it upon him as a measure likely to gain him popularity. But there were difficulties in the way. The record of the Parlements was not a good one. The philosophers disliked them for their religious persecutions and their censorship of the press; the Church remembered their action against the Jesuits: Turgot knew that they would soon again be in opposition to the Crown and would therefore resist the reforms which he hoped to introduce through the agency of the Crown. But the advice of Maurepas carried the day, and the Parlements were reestablished. They were ordered to abstain from factious opposition to the decrees of the Crown for the future; but their exile had taught them nothing. They pursued the same policy as heretofore until they were engulfed in the Revolution. One of the most important results of the restoration was that Malesherbes, the president of the *cour des aides*—a philosopher, a great admirer of Turgot and a passionate lover of liberty—entered the Ministry and gave Turgot most valuable support in his plans of reform. He soon showed the tendency of his ideas by abolishing *lettres de cachet*.

The Reforms and Projects of Turgot.

It is easy to sum up the chief ideas of Turgot's statesmanship. He hoped to destroy pecuniary privilege, to establish legal equality, to free trade from its trammels, and to provide organization for the utterance of public opinion, without in any way allowing the Monarchy to abdicate in favour of a democracy. His administration lasted only twenty months, and he was only able to accomplish a small part of his intentions. It is one of the great regrets of history that Louis did not give him the thorough

support that he had promised. Had he been as faithful to Turgot as Louis XIII was to Richelieu, he might have seen the society and government of France refashioned, not indeed without strain and stress, but in such a way as to leave the Crown of France, for some time at least, safe and strong. For though Turgot's ideas were not beyond criticism, their main tendency was in the direction of those reforms which at last the Revolution accomplished amidst so much bloodshed.

The year 1775 was passed in preparation. In March Malesherbes, before his entry into the Ministry, had as president of the *cour des aides* protested against the financial system of France and urged the calling of the States-General. We find the demand constantly made and with increasing strength during the following years, until at last it is granted in 1788. The year 1775 was also disturbed by serious corn riots, which began at Dijon and soon spread into Brie, the Soissonnais and Normandy. The acts of the rioters were curiously methodical and seemed to be directed. It has been thought that the real scarcity was used by Turgot's opponents to foment these riots in the hope of driving him from office. But he never lacked courage, and Louis XVI gave him at this time a full support. The riots were suppressed, the ringleaders hanged, and Turgot continued to mature his projects. His first actual proposals were made in January 1776. The principal of these were, (1) the abolition of the *corvée*, and the substitution of a tax on all landed property; (2) the establishment of free trade in corn for Paris by the abolition of all the old vexatious restrictions; (3) the abolition of the whole system of trades-guilds, which, originally established for the protection of industry, had now become an intolerable restraint upon it. Other proposals, such as the modification of the *gabelle*, the abolition of all feudal dues on the royal domain, and the ratification of Protestant marriages, were for the present kept in the background. The King was ready to support Turgot on all these points, but before they could be put in execution they had of course

to be registered by the Parlement. It was now seen how great a mistake had been made in restoring the Parlements. Turgot met, as he had anticipated, a violent resistance; but the King did not flinch. A "bed of justice" was held in March, and the edicts were registered.

They were only the first instalment of Turgot's ideas. During the next few months every department of the State felt his untiring energy for reform. Without formally abolishing the financial privileges of the two first orders he modified them in practice. Nobles and clergy had in the past often managed to escape from taxes such as the *capitation*, which had been specially designed to reach them. Their exemption was now checked, if not destroyed entirely. Turgot did his utmost to liberate trade and industry in France itself from the old restraints and to facilitate trade with foreign countries. Restrictions on the wine trade were abolished, and the internal dues on corn and wine, both for towns and provinces, were almost entirely removed. Foreign trade was made easier by giving to many harbours the privilege which had hitherto belonged only to a few. Though he could not abolish the *taille*, Turgot removed some of the worst abuses in the method of collecting it. Nor was his work confined to the destruction of old abuses. He organised an improved postal service in France, and had a plan for improving the canal system. He decreased the debt by borrowing at a lower rate of interest than had been customary. Like all his contemporaries he had a great, perhaps an exaggerated belief in the effects of education, and projected a national scheme of secular instruction. Most interesting of all was the system of assemblies with which he proposed to govern France. He had no belief in government by the people, but placed a great value on the expression of public opinion. He proposed therefore to establish a system of assemblies (or, as he called them, *municipalities*) which was to stretch from the parish up through the *arrondissement* or district to the province. Above all, as representative of the

whole nation, was to stand the Grand Municipality. These bodies were to be elected by different suffrages, and were to have strictly limited powers, with full liberty of expressing their opinion on all topics. The chief function of the "grand municipality" was to be the granting of taxes.

Dismissal of Turgot.

To realise these plans Turgot must have been in office for years and have been supported by the full strength of the Crown against the opposition which would certainly be encountered. For twenty months Louis sustained him with enthusiasm: Turgot and himself, he said, were the only two men in France who loved the people. But his enemies increased in number. The noble class offered a fierce opposition when they saw that it was his design to abolish all privilege. The clergy saw with alarm a philosopher in power who believed in religious toleration: they urged in 1775 the maintenance of the laws against Protestants and an increase in their severity. The Parlements knew Turgot to be their enemy. His ideas on taxation had been attacked in a pamphlet by Necker called *Corn Legislation*. Turgot's manners too were not attractive or conciliatory. Conscious of his own unblemished rectitude and of the vast importance of his work, he did not try to gain popularity by arts that were not natural to him. The Queen joined the movement against the great minister: all her impulses were aristocratic, and she regarded Turgot's plans as levelling and revolutionary. The decisive part that she took in overthrowing him was the most serious of the many injuries that she inflicted on France. The King believed in him and liked him; but Louis's good qualities as well as his bad, his desire for sympathy as well as his weakness, made it impossible for him to persist in his support. Malesherbes, the only official supporter that Turgot possessed, was the first to go. At last on May 12, 1776, Turgot was dismissed. He retired with dignity from his post: "I have no weakness, or falsehood or dissimulation to accuse myself of," he wrote to Maurepas. He was fully

aware of the importance of the step that had been taken. "The destiny of princes who are guided by courtiers is that of Charles I" are words attributed to him at this period.

This dismissal of Turgot was greeted with exultation by the Court and the privileged classes generally, and with consternation and despair by the philosophic party. It is now generally regarded as the most critical incident in Louis XVI's reign before the Revolution. There seems no reason to doubt that Turgot could have effected the necessary transformation in French society if he had been maintained in office for a sufficient period. Some of his ideas were doubtless faulty, his proposal to place the whole burden of taxation upon the land especially so, but experience might have changed or modified his ideas on this and other points. After his removal there was no further attempt to bring the Government into harmony with the requirements and ideas of the time: and in the end therefore the Government was swept entirely away.

Turgot's immediate successor was Clugny, formerly *intendant* of Bordeaux. He came in on a wave of reaction and used his short tenure of office to undo most of Turgot's work. The *corvée*, the trade-guilds, and the restrictions upon trade in corn were all reintroduced, and Clugny revived the worst traditions of Louis XV's reign by establishing a state lottery. The King was made to defend it in the preamble to the edict by saying that, as the people of France must gamble, it was clearly best that their gambling should be for the profit of France. Clugny died in October (1777), and the next appointment was a more serious one. The actual control of the finances was given to the Genevese banker Necker, though on account of his Protestant opinions the titular office was not bestowed upon him. He was already well known in the financial world: the worth and honesty of his character were admitted on all hands. Except in the uprightness of his character he was a very great contrast to Turgot. Turgot was reserved, austere, without any of

Necker.

the gifts of popularity, a statesman of wide range, and a financier only because finance was one department of statesmanship. Necker was vain and ostentatious: he courted popularity and bestowed great pains on self-advertisement. He disdained the schemes of social reconstruction which had occupied Turgot's chief thoughts, accepted things as they were, and devoted all his attention to financial expedients for meeting the liabilities of the State. The confidence which the financial world placed in him stood him in good stead. One of his first measures was to float a new loan (Jan. 1778) which was eagerly taken up by foreign as well as French investors. Strict economy and advantageous loans were nearly the sum of his policy; but he was hardly installed in office before he was confronted with a great war, which laid still further burdens upon the finances of France.

The American War of Independence.

The American War of Independence belongs only in a small part of it to French history. The English colonies in America had hitherto known the French only as enemies, and the Seven Years' War had been fought largely in order that they might be freed from the trammels that the French strove to put upon them by the line of forts on the Ohio and the Mississippi. That war, as we have seen, led to the entire overthrow of the French power in America, and the colonists were freed from all dangers of rivalry from France. Then had come strained relations with England. Attempts were made to recover from the American colonies some part of the expenses that had been incurred on their behalf: and however these attempts varied in form, they were equally resisted, and the outbreak of war became probable. With the change in the feeling of the colonists towards England their former hostility to France tended to disappear. Moreover the new thought which was so active in France had penetrated into America. Franklin found himself quite at home among the disciples of Voltaire and Rousseau: the preamble of the Declaration of

Independence reads like an extract from the *Social Contract*: when the revolted colonies summoned Canada to join them it was with arguments drawn from Montesquieu. The ground then was prepared for an alliance with France. She on her side was thirsting for her revenge upon England, and the republican ideas of the Americans quickly found an echo among a people which had been taught by all their most popular writers to admire Lycurgus and Phocion, Scipio and Cato.

It is not necessary here to recount the early struggles of the colonists. Open hostilities began in April 1775. Washington had been made Commander-in-chief. On July 4th, 1776, the Declaration of Independence had been issued. It declared, in language that echoed the sentiments of Rousseau, "that all men were created equal and endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights; that when a government no longer secured these rights for its subjects the people themselves had the right to alter or abolish it." But despite some early successes the colonists found themselves face to face with a very difficult task and began to search for allies. In October 1776 Benjamin Franklin came to France to negotiate an alliance. His strange appearance, his simple manners, and the fact that he was an enemy of England soon made him the most popular figure in Paris. Necker saw with alarm the prospect of war, and the King naturally did not share the general enthusiasm of the country for republican institutions. But neither the King nor his most important minister could check or resist the popular enthusiasm. When the news of General Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga arrived, all scruples were thrown aside, and in February 1778 a treaty of defensive alliance was drawn up between France and the United States. This led soon and inevitably to open war between England and France. In April a French squadron under d'Estaing left France for Delaware.

The most remarkable feature of the war that follows is the complete rehabilitation of the French navy. It is true that in

the end Great Britain gained a great naval victory over France and thus brought the war to an issue far less disastrous than seemed at one time probable. But if we contrast the utter despondency and invariable defeat of France on the seas during the Seven Years' War, it is extraordinary to note how, whether with single vessels, small squadrons, or large navies, France held her own both in fighting qualities and in the skill with which her ships were handled. Had not France been able to secure supremacy at sea, at least for a time, the war must have dragged on much longer and probably would have reached a less decisive result.

In July 1778 d'Orvilliers fought with Admiral Keppel a stubborn and indecisive engagement near Ushant. French opinion rightly hailed the result as a moral victory for France. A descent upon England was planned for the next year under the direction of d'Orvilliers and Lafayette, a young nobleman who had been one of the first to join the American insurgents. The enterprise came to nothing, but for more than a hundred days the French fleet held those waters where the English were accustomed to an undisputed supremacy. Great things were meanwhile occurring in America. The British had suffered their first severe defeat in October 1777 when Burgoyne was beaten at Saratoga and obliged to surrender with his whole force. But the war was not by any means decided by this defeat. The British had gained important successes in Pennsylvania and had occupied Philadelphia. All was yet uncertain when in June 1778 d'Estaing arrived with 18 vessels and 4,000 men. In July 1780 Rochambeau brought over 6,000 French soldiers whose superior training and discipline were a most valuable reinforcement to the strained resources of the United States. Yet in the end all turned upon the command of the sea. General Cornwallis had transported his army to Virginia and invaded it, relying partly on the reported sympathies of that colony with England. He gained considerable successes and practically subdued South Carolina. But the country generally

was hostile to him; his troops dwindled even as a result of their victories; he was harassed by the French and American army and at last marched to Yorktown on Chesapeake Bay in order to get into touch with the English navy. But he found, not the English navy, but the French under Count la Grasse, which for the time held the control of the seas. The English position was thus entirely hopeless. In October 1781 Cornwallis with 7000 men surrendered to Washington. We need not follow the fortunes of the war in America beyond this. There was never again any chance of a British victory. It is too often forgotten how great a part the French navy had played in bringing about the result.

European coalition against Great Britain. Victories of France.

The naval struggle was the most important feature of the war for France. In the later stages of the war everything seemed to conspire against Great Britain. At home she was shaken by the Gordon Riots and the threatening demand of the Irish volunteers for an independent Parliament. New enemies rose up as the fortunes of England fell. Spain joined France in 1779, and Holland in Dec. 1780. Besides these states, which actually took part in the war, others under the leadership of Russia seized the opportunity to protest against Great Britain's claim to search neutral vessels for contraband of war. This new alliance called itself an 'armed neutrality,' but it was clear that it was hostile to the maritime power and pretensions of Great Britain. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, Austria, Portugal and the Two Sicilies all joined in this protest against the right of search and in the adoption of new and more equitable rules for trading during a maritime war. At one moment there was a hope that France might be diverted and weakened by European complications as she had been during the Seven Years' War: for the question of the Bavarian Succession seemed likely to lead to a struggle in Germany. But she had learned something by experience, and refused the strong entreaty of the

Emperor Joseph II to support, as in the Seven Years' War, the action of Austria against Frederick the Great. Marie Antoinette urged the claims of the late ally of France, but to no purpose. Vergennes, the foreign minister, realised the all-importance of the struggle with England and concentrated the efforts of France upon it with very successful results. In January 1779 Senegal, Gambia, and Sierra Leone were occupied by the French. But the chief struggle was for the West Indies, where battle after battle was fought, with the result that the French gradually gained the upper hand. St Vincent and Grenada were occupied in the spring of 1779, and in 1781 it seemed as if all the British possessions in the West Indies would fall to the French. They captured Demerara, St Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat and Tobago. In March 1782 Minorca was attacked and the Governor cooped up in Port Mahon. No British navy could reach him, and he was forced to capitulate. Gibraltar itself was hotly besieged, and for a long time no English fleet appeared to revictual it. If the French and Spanish fleets could hold the seas it was certain to fall in time. Even in India the British dominion was threatened. The French admiral Suffren fought four desperate battles with Admiral Hughes, and the struggle was still uncertain when peace was concluded as a result of the course of the struggle elsewhere. At last in 1782 fortune favoured the efforts of the British, who on the sea, at least, had shown no lack of energy during the whole course of the war. In the spring of 1782 the French planned a great attack on Jamaica. Their fleet, commanded by Count la Grasse, was met by the English fleet under Rodney on April 12. The battle that followed was desperately contested for ten hours; but Rodney succeeded in breaking the French line and captured six of their vessels. It was the only decisive naval action of the war, and gave back the command of the seas to the British.

But despite the victory the English were weary of the war and asked for peace. It is not necessary here to follow the

negotiations which resulted in the Treaty of Versailles (Sept. 1783). Great Britain recognised the independence of the United States. Conquests made during the war were for the most part restored upon both sides. But Great Britain ceded St Lucia and Tobago, Senegal and Goree to France, and Minorca and Florida to Spain. France too obtained better conditions for her fisheries on the coast of Newfoundland.

Treaty of Versailles.

The last war therefore undertaken by the old Monarchy resulted in a brilliant success for France. We might have expected that, as the government of Louis XV had suffered by its military disgraces, so that of Louis XVI would have been strengthened by its success. But that is far from being the case. No statesman and no soldier made for himself any great reputation by the war. Maurepas was still the chief Minister of France, but we hardly hear his name in connection with the war. Vergennes was Minister of Foreign Affairs, and had directed the policy of France with great skill and success, but he had gained no popular prestige; the name of Castries, the Minister of War, and of Ségur, the Minister of the Navy, are little known. La Grasse was blamed for the final defeat which effaced all his early successes. Lafayette had acquired a great name, but not for military skill. The victory seemed to have been won rather by the new opinions, by what were soon to be called the ideas of the Revolution, than by the old Monarchy; and the republican example of the United States was destined to withdraw more support from the Monarchy than it gained by the victory that had been won.

Necker by providing funds for the war had done as much as anyone to make success possible; but when the war ended he was no longer minister. His energies were chiefly occupied in raising loans and enforcing economy. But even he could not wholly escape the influence of the time which placed so high a value on representative government. He proposed therefore to establish

The fall of Necker.

provincial assemblies chiefly for the consideration of questions of taxation, to be called "provincial administrations." Such assemblies were actually established in Berry and Guienne. But before he could proceed further with this idea his career was wrecked on the old difficulty of finance. We have seen how at first his great financial reputation allowed him to contract loans on easy terms. But the expenses of the American war were very heavy. It was necessary even to send a subvention to the United States. In face of these demands the credit of the State sank. It was under these circumstances that Necker published in 1780 his famous *Compte Rendu au Roi*— a survey of the financial position of France. The first object of this much disputed document seems to have been to reestablish the financial credit of France by revealing her resources[1]. It was a general financial statement, not a detailed account of any particular year. Its tone was decidedly optimist: it showed the income of France steadily increasing and exhibited a surplus on the current year. If the object of Necker was to induce capitalists to lend, it was entirely successful. Necker managed shortly afterwards to float another large loan. But that was by no means the only result. The *Compte Rendu* was read with extraordinary avidity; six thousand copies were sold on the first day. Soon Necker found that it had created enemies on every side. Some were angry because he had revealed the injustices and inequalities of the taxation of France, and was credited with the design of removing them; others called his book an attack on the royal authority and an attempt to "anglicise" the government of France. His colleagues in the

[1] The figures of the *Compte Rendu* were made to prove that, in spite of the expenses of the war and the loans that had been contracted, France was perfectly solvent and had a surplus of 10 million livres. But this statement has always been regarded as delusive: it seems that a frank statement of the financial position would have revealed a deficit of 46 millions. The chief figures of Necker's *Compte Rendu* are given in Gasquet's *Institutions Politiques*, vol. I. p. 359.

Ministry denounced him; the clergy were glad to strike at one whom they disliked as a Protestant, and the Parlements at one whom they knew to be an enemy of their privileges. Necker asked for a seat in the Ministry, for as yet he had exercised the function of Controller-General without the title or the pay. But this was refused him on the grounds of his religion, and he was insulted by a proposal that he should embrace Catholicism. He urged that at least he should be given the financial control of the naval and war departments. This too was refused him, and he resigned (May 1781). His retirement only manifested his popularity, which both now and subsequently seems to have exceeded his deserts. His experience, coupled with that of Turgot, showed how impossible it was for a man of honour and character to maintain himself in the position of Finance Minister, for the King had neither energy nor courage sufficient to support a minister in the attacks upon the privileged orders, which were absolutely necessary if France were to be made solvent.

The coming of the Revolution.

What remains of the history of France bears a well-marked character. Real statesmanship had disappeared from the Council of the King with Turgot; honesty vanished with Necker. But the financial difficulty remained and grew: and the only means of meeting it was more and more clearly seen to be the abolition of financial privilege and the organization of the State in harmony with the new ideas. Various methods were tried to secure this end; but honesty, skill, and energy were equally wanting in the King and his advisers. At last, therefore, when all other means had been exhausted the King appealed reluctantly to the revolutionary and incalculable force of the nation.

Calonne.

The failure of Necker showed how difficult was the task of the Controller-General of Finances. There was some difficulty therefore in filling up the post, and the first occupants passed in rapid succession. Joly de Fleury held the post for a short time and was then succeeded

for an even shorter time by d'Ormesson. At last in November 1783 Calonne was appointed, and he succeeded in maintaining himself in his post until April 1787, an unexpected achievement. For the greater part of his tenure of office the financial difficulty seemed to have disappeared. The Court had money for the asking; there was no longer any talk of putting disagreeable burdens on the privileged classes. Calonne had a clear and, for its object, accurate theory of finance. Borrowing seemed to him the only resource left to France. To borrow it was necessary to have credit; to have credit a nation must appear rich: lavish expenditure would give capitalists the desired impression of real wealth. The Court was not slow to adopt Calonne's suggestions. The insistence upon economy that had characterised both Turgot and Necker was no longer heard. New palaces (Saint Cloud and Rambouillet) were added to the excessive number already possessed by the Crown. The festivities of the Court were as numerous as they had been in the most prosperous days of the Monarchy. It is clear then that Calonne's system did really work: lenders were found to advance money, though at a high rate of interest.

Elsewhere than in the finances these years saw an eddy of reaction. De Ségur was the Minister of War. He introduced many reforms in the equipment of the army that, later, stood the revolutionary armies in good stead. But he offered the most open defiance to the ideas of equality and an open career, which were taking an ever stronger hold on the nation at large. Already in 1779 noble birth had been made a condition for an artillery officer. But in 1781 this was extended in a still more rigorous form to the whole army. Every officer, it was decreed, must be able to show four generations of nobility. And about the same time was issued an edict that only nobles could sit in the Parlements or occupy the highest and best paid posts in the Church. But, meantime, there was no reaction in public opinion. Clearly the spirit of Rousseau dominated men's ideas more completely than ever.

Thus the Monarchy and the nation were drifting into bitter opposition. And now there occurred the mysterious affair of the 'Diamond Necklace,' which rightly or wrongly robbed the throne of any personal prestige that it might possess through the respectability of the private life of its occupants. The Queen was suddenly accused of having used a sort of fraud in order to acquire a diamond necklace. She herself was clearly innocent of all guilt, but the trial occupied the attention of Paris for nearly a year and brought into view the corruption that still reigned at the Court and the bitter hostility of the Parlement to the Government. Marie Antoinette's reputation never wholly recovered from the effects of this celebrated case.

The Assembly of the Notables.

At last the time came when Calonne's system could work no longer. In three years he had borrowed 487 millions of livres; both the debt and the deficit had mounted at a terrifying rate. He had always lived 'for the success of the moment' (as Mirabeau said of him), and now even that success was impossible. The capitalists would lend no more. Calonne determined to meet the situation with an originality and a light-heartedness that is characteristic of him. He proposed to make a concession to the public demand for representative government by calling together the Notables—whose name had not been heard since the days of Richelieu. They were merely nominees of the Crown, called to give advice, but without any power to enforce their wishes. Before this body Calonne proposed to make a revelation of the financial secrets of the State, to expose the nature of the deficit and debt, and to call on the privileged classes, from whom the Notables were to be almost entirely chosen, to make the sacrifices and admit the reforms which alone could save the financial credit of the State. Louis XVI was inclined to protest against a proposal worse than that which had brought about the downfall of Necker; but he was persuaded of its necessity, and the Notables, 142 in number, were summoned.

The Notables met (Feb. 1787). The King opened their session, but gained no popularity by an act which was seen to be dictated by necessity. Calonne spoke, with an astonishing lightness of heart, of the vast debt; the abuses, the privileges and prejudices by which it was caused; the reforms that could alone supply the remedy. Subsequently he explained his proposals of a land tax, which was to admit of no exemptions, and provincial assemblies that were to control the general system of taxation. He had hoped that the Notables would be flattered by being consulted, and would raise little difficulty about granting the reforms. He hoped too that public opinion would be on his side. He was entirely deceived. The Notables resisted him from the first. Public opinion was too revolutionary to accept with gratitude anything from the hand of the existing Government. Lafayette and others disputed the King's right to impose taxation, and appealed to the States-General. Louis XVI no longer supported Calonne. He was dismissed in April 1787.

Cardinal Loménie de Brienne.

Henceforth the Monarchy hardly made an effort to control the country. Real authority had passed to the leaders of public opinion. A pamphlet or a speech was more important than an edict of the King. Calonne was succeeded by his bitter opponent Cardinal Loménie de Brienne, a man of some talent but of depraved life and character. Though he had opposed Calonne, he did not lead any reaction against his system. It was now clear that, in whatever form, the privileged classes must pay. But the Notables were dismissed. They had shaken the throne instead of strengthening it, and they were quite insufficient as an organ of public opinion.

The assembly of Notables had thus failed entirely to realise the hopes which Calonne had so light-heartedly entertained. Upon their dismissal the Monarchy had to face the same financial and political problems as before under circumstances of increasing difficulty; for public feeling was at fever-heat, and

the idea of some entire change in the society and government of France was more eagerly held than ever. Yet the situation was not hopeless for the Monarchy, if the King and his counsellors had been able to face it with decision and energy: Louis XVI was still popular, and the belief in the power of the Government for good or evil was undiminished. Loménie de Brienne determined to use the existing machinery of government to enforce the taxes which even the assembly of Notables had recognised as necessary. The King was by the constitution of France the sole legislative authority, and his right to impose taxation had never been seriously questioned. The Minister therefore prepared a series of edicts and sent them, one by one, to the Parlement for registration. Those first presented passed without difficulty: free trade in corn was declared, provincial assemblies were to be established, the *corvée* was abolished. But then two edicts were submitted to Parlement, the first establishing a land tax which should fall on privileged and unprivileged, the second a stamp tax. Parlement prepared to offer a determined opposition to these taxes, and its leaders demanded a statement of the national accounts in order that they might decide on the necessity of the proposed measures. They declared that neither King nor Parlement was competent to impose such novel taxes upon the State. For such purposes a representative National Assembly was declared to be necessary, and, little realising to what a goal they were guiding the State and their own courts, they demanded the convocation of the States-General. The King thereupon made a show of determination. He summoned the Parlement to Versailles and enforced registration in a "bed of justice": but next day, amidst very great excitement, the members declared the registration null and illegal. The King thereupon followed the traditional course and exiled the Parlement to Troyes (15 Aug. 1787).

But the weapons that had served Louis XIV so well broke in the hands of his descendant. The Parlement was really

defending privilege against the principle of equality, but the people saw only that it was resisting the Government and demanding the States-General; and the journey of the members to their place of exile was a triumphal progress. Pamphlets, placards and caricatures appeared in vast numbers. The King was rarely attacked, but Marie Antoinette was so unpopular that she dared not appear in public, and the Count of Artois, the King's brother, was almost equally hated. The deadlock with Parlement was settled by a compromise; the character of the taxes was somewhat changed and the Parlement consented to return to its functions. At the same time the King declared that the States-General should be called together in 1792. These concessions were considerable, but they neither satisfied the Parlement nor public opinion. When the edicts were introduced they were made again the occasion for a heated debate: the session was then turned into a "bed of justice," and registration was enforced by the usual formula.

The attempted Coup d'État.

The edicts were registered, but the King was not satisfied with his victory. It was now clear how unwise it had been to undo the work of Louis XV and call the Parlement back into existence. The Government, in each attempt at reform, had found in the Parlement its most dangerous opponent: it was now determined, without exactly repeating the work of Louis XV and Maupeou, to strike a decisive blow at its pretensions and powers. On the 8th May, 1788, the Parlement of Paris was summoned to Versailles, and there in a "bed of justice" a list of reforms was communicated to it, which it was required to register at once. The proposals were in accordance with the spirit of the times and, if insisted on at an earlier period of the reign, would probably have been welcomed by public opinion. There were to be reforms in the administration of justice, all of a humane and equitable kind; the courts of inquests and requests (important sections of the Parlement of Paris) were to be abolished, and the scope of the judicial action of the

Parlement itself was to be very greatly diminished; new courts of different kinds were to be created to discharge certain of the functions hitherto exercised by Parlement; finally, and most important of all, a new court was to be established for the registration of laws. This new court was to be called the *cour plénière*: it was represented as a re-establishment of the primitive court of the early Kings of France, and was to be constituted very largely of members who would be under the control of the King. In addition to these definite proposals the King promised to convoke the States-General, "as often as they were demanded by the needs of the State."

Recall of Necker.

If the King had hoped to conciliate public opinion by these proposals he was quickly undeceived. Nothing short of some form of national self-government would satisfy the excitement of the time. The whole of the members of the Parlement took an oath of resistance. The clergy, in its general assembly, joined the outcry and demanded the immediate convocation of the States-General. A more ominous feature of the situation was the first stirring of popular revolt which made itself felt in certain of the provinces. Dauphiné and Brittany took the lead in this movement and denounced as infamous anyone who took service under the Crown. The Government might have weathered the storm, at least for a time, if the financial pressure had not been so great: but the disorders of the time had naturally diminished the ordinary revenue, and something had to be done at once. The King, in establishing the *cour plénière*, had said that he would "always persist" in his determination. But he very soon had to eat his words: it was decided to yield to the outcry for the States-General, and they were summoned for 5 May, 1789. Brienne clung to office for a little longer, but he was regarded as the chief author of the late proposals and was very unpopular in consequence. His financial expedients proved unsuccessful and in August he resigned. Necker had since his dismissal been the popular

hero of France, and now the King unwillingly placed him in charge of the finances once more.

The Elections and the End of the Absolute Monarchy.

After the declaration of the King which summoned the States-General for the following spring, the elections were the one engrossing interest of France. In quieter times foreign affairs would have claimed much attention, for Russia was making a decisive advance towards Turkey, Austria was laying violent hands upon the liberties of Belgium, and in Holland a revolution, which bears some resemblance to that which was soon to follow in France, was violently repressed with the assistance of a Prussian army. Moreover a series of bad harvests had reduced the people of some provinces to the verge of starvation, and it required all Necker's financial skill to find temporary relief for the sufferers. But, in spite of all, the elections engrossed public attention, and there was eager debate and argument on the methods of election and the details of procedure. For the most part there was surprisingly little disorder. The prevailing mood was one of vague but eager anticipation. There were some who feared for their privileges, but clergy and nobility were themselves penetrated by the enthusiasm of the time. The social aspirations of these months and the general sentiment of fraternity among classes and peoples are unparalleled in history: and, though they were transitory and destined before long to give way to disappointment and disillusionment, they inspired much of the noble legislative effort of the Revolution. Their echo is to be found in the welcome that Wordsworth and Coleridge gave to the movement in its early stages, in the anticipation of the former that the Revolution would inaugurate universal peace, and in Coleridge's ardent hope that France "conquering by her happiness alone" would soon "compel the nations to be free." The Monarchy and all its institutions were bankrupt, but the nation was profoundly confident that a great destiny was preparing for it.

There were difficult questions to be settled before the States-General could come into being. Their last meeting had been held in 1614, and only historians and antiquaries knew what they had really been. Two points with regard to their constitution seemed to demand immediate settlement. First, were the Commons—the third Estate—to have only as many members as each of the other two orders, or as many as both combined? Unless this question were decided in favour of "double representation" the privileged classes would be in a majority, and the establishment of equality could hardly be effected. Further, there was the question of the method of voting. Were all the deputies to sit together and settle every question by a simple majority; or were the orders to sit separately and decide questions by a majority of orders? Again the future of France seemed to depend on the decision, and the popular clamour was loud for "vote by head."

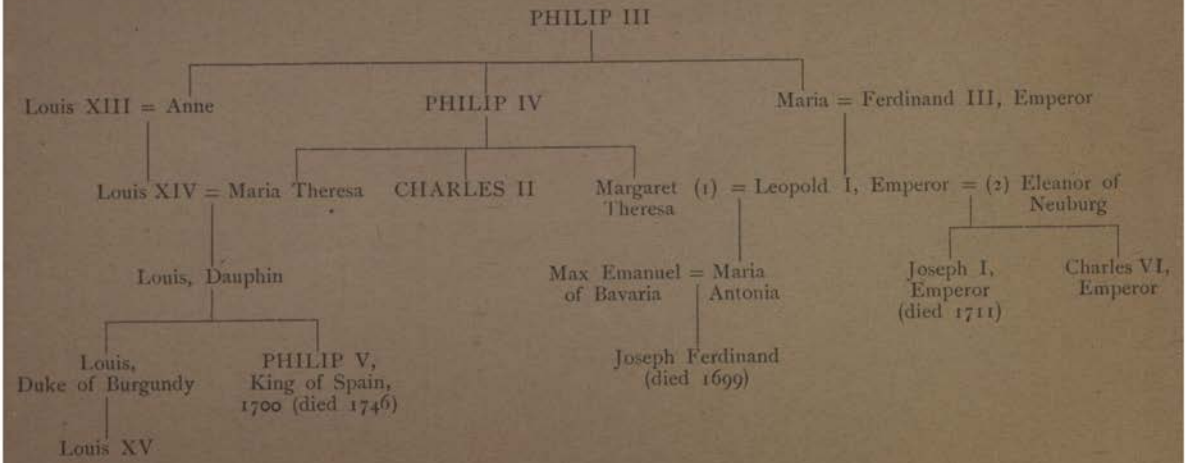
In presence of these important questions the King showed a fatal indecision. The Parlement of Paris, rallying now to the side of privilege, declared that "the forms of 1614" should be followed; that is, that both points should be decided against the Commons. An assembly of Notables was convoked, and gave a decided opinion in the same sense. But, acting upon the advice of Necker, the King declared that the total number of deputies should be at least a thousand, and that the representatives of the Commons should be equal in numbers to those of the clergy and nobility combined. The question of the forms of procedure, not less vital than that of number, was left undecided, and eventually was the cause of the first great dispute and the first great popular victory of the Revolution.

As soon as it was determined what number of deputies should be elected the elections were proceeded with. The form of election was somewhat cumbrous, especially for the Third Estate, and three months elapsed before the returns were complete. On the 5th May, 1789, a thousand and thirty-nine deputies met the King at Versailles. With that date the

Revolution is usually reckoned to begin; and certainly with that date the French Monarchy, as the phrase had been understood by Henry of Navarre and Richelieu and Louis XIV, came irrevocably to an end.

APPENDIX.

Genealogical Table to illustrate the question of the Spanish Succession.


PHILIP III
Louis XIII = Anne
PHILIP IV
Maria = Ferdinand III, Emperor
Louis XIV = Maria Theresa
CHARLES II
Margaret Theresa
(1) = Leopold I, Emperor = (2) Eleanor of Neuburg
Louis, Dauphin
Max Emanuel of Bavaria = Maria Antonia
Joseph I, Emperor (died 1711)
Charles VI, Emperor
Louis, Duke of Burgundy
PHILIP V, King of Spain, 1700 (died 1746)
Joseph Ferdinand (died 1699)
Louis XV

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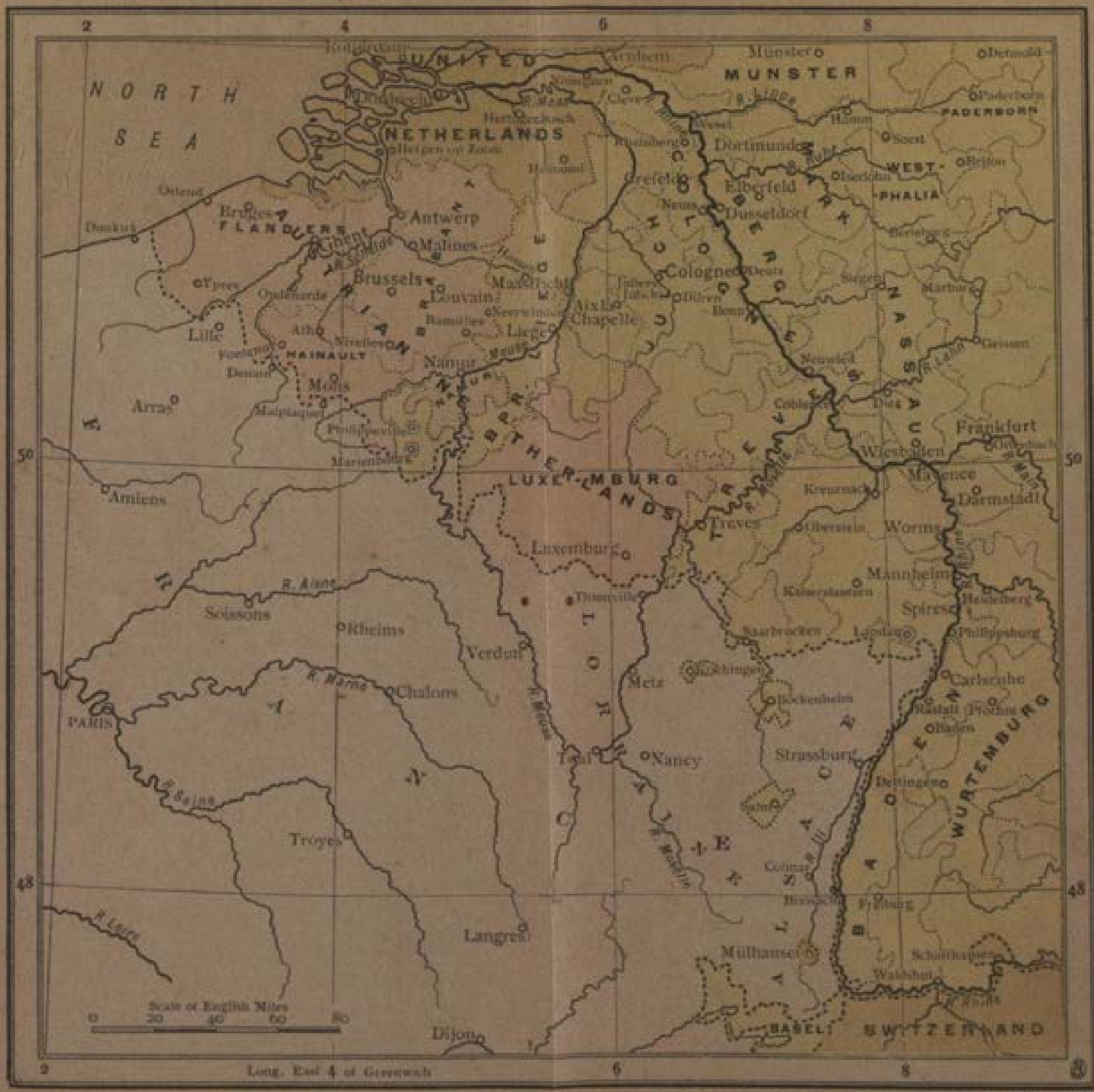

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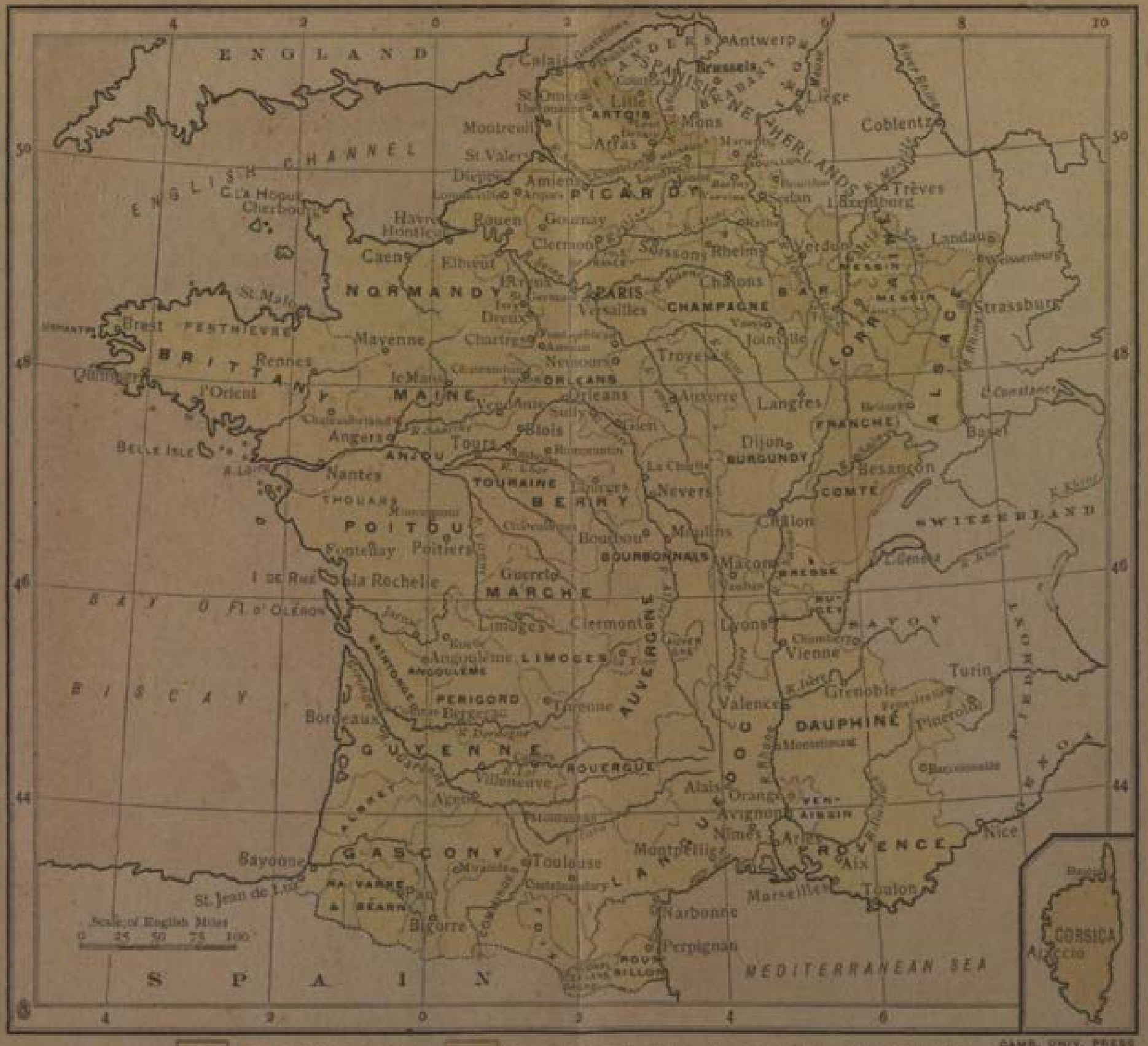

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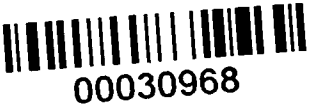
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